



LEGEND OF THE GREAT SAINT

BOOK 01
THE YOUNG
WANDERER

Dream Teller

EPUB CREATION BY LISA HAYES

Legend of the Great Saint

(大圣传)

by

Dream Teller

(说梦者)

Synopsis

Among the demons, the supreme ones are called “Great Saints.”

A young man leaves his mountain village, treading far and wide under the heavens, striding step by step into legend, becoming a myth.

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Book 01 - The Young Wanderer

Chapter 1: A Green Bull Opens Its Mouth

Under the pitch black curtain of the night, the unbroken chains of mountain peaks crouched like giant beasts, quietly waiting for dawn.

Under a small hill shaped like a crouching bull sat a small small village.

“Li the Second, wake up and hurry up to get to work!” A scold broke the silence. A middle-aged peasant woman with a waist like a barrel cursed at the bullpen.

On a stack of hay in the bullpen, a thin young man woke up with a start from his dreams, blankly thinking: “Where am I?”

He had that dream again. In the dream he lived in a city with high-rising buildings, and he played all day on the magical treasure known as a computer. On the streets strange monsters made of steel pushed and shoved and bumped into each others.

Then finally on a certain day, he was run over by a strange beast called “BMW.”

Then he suddenly awoke. Oh right, he crossed to another world.

More than a dozen years had gone by, and the things that happened in his previous world were almost like a dream.

He felt the itch of mosquito bites as he surveyed his surroundings. Obviously this wasn't any kind of grand place. There was probably no world-crosser as miserable as him in the whole universe.

Counting the time, it'd been probably fifteen years already!

His parents in this world were the most ordinary of farmers in this Crouching Bull Village, and they both passed away years ago when he was still a child, leaving him to be raised by his older brother. His brother was Li the Eldest, so he was Li the Second.

The village wasn't very sophisticated and many villagers went all their lives without a decent name. Thanks to the knowledge from his previous world, he had chosen a formal name for himself, called "Li Qingshan," meaning Li Green Hill.

["Why be bones buried in the birthland, when life is high and low a green hill?"](#) Even if he crossed to another world, he still had to survive. No, he had to lead a better life than in his previous world, or it would be a waste of this second life the heavens had given him.

Excerpt from a poem by Japanese general Saigo Takamori. Later the line was "borrowed" by Mao Zedong in a poem of his own, making it famous in China.

Green hill here means somewhere seen as a good place to die. The line literally means: Why should you be buried where you were born, when anywhere's a good place to die? The deeper meaning is: men shouldn't be restricted to the place they were born, but follow their aspirations throughout the whole world.

By the way, Takamori's stand against the Meiji government is the basis of the movie *The Last Samurai*. Katsumoto from the movie is also based on him.

Remembering his childhood back when he had just crossed over, his mood quieted down from dread and confusion, and the grand ambition of a world-crossed ignited in his chest. But then he found out his belly was hungry, and he had no food to eat.

Those brother and sister-in-law of his saw him like a burden. They threw all the dirty and tiring chores at him, and they always left him the worst food. There was no shred of any family affection.

His age was small and he had nowhere to go. The only thing he could do was to try and display the attitude of a child prodigy, but people thought he was possessed by ghosts, and the village witch forcefully poured his belly full of blessed water. He hadn't dared to act rashly since then.

Consequently the villagers still called him Li the Second. Li Qingshan was only a joke.

Li Qingshan's sister-in-law cursed him for a while, and when he showed no reaction, she broke inside and brandished a bamboo strip in her hand, mercilessly whipping it on his body. "Lazy bones, play dead will you, play dead!"

Li Qingshan was thinking of his former life and his mind was distracted by his anxiety right then. He abruptly stood up and

snatched the bamboo strip away, glaring at the peasant woman.

Big Wife Li saw that the child from back then was already half a head taller than her, and she felt some fear, but her momentum didn't diminish in the least: "What a good Li the Second. We raised you painstakingly for so long, but you still dare to act wild with me. Wait til your brother wakes up and sorts you out. You're not getting anything to eat!" She turned and left as soon as she was done talking.

After Big Wife Li left, Li Qingshan threw away the bamboo strip and sighed heavily. He went beside the manger and told an old green bull: "Elder brother bull, Elder brother bull, I already grew up and became a man. I don't want to endure this anymore, I just don't want to part with you."

His parents had split the family properties on their deathbed, but the house and farm fields had all been forcibly seized by his brother and sister-in-law. The only property he had left now was this green bull.

Thanks to this bull he could usually find work with his landowner, and he could still tag along and get enough to eat. He didn't know how thin he be if he had to stay at home and only eat rice peels or wild grasses. So he never treated the bull like livestock, and instead respectfully called it "elder brother bull."

Everyone in the village knew that Li the Second could do without Big Brother Li, but he couldn't do without big brother bull.

The green bull had a shiny hide and was plump and strong. It was obvious how much time and energy Li Qingshan spent everyday on taking care of it, but it already showed signs of aging, and one of his horns was broken. That break was very smooth, like the cut of a blade.

The green bull opened its moist eyes and watched Li Qingshan as if it could understand human emotions. When it pulled itself together and stood up, Li Qingshan hefted himself on it with practiced ease before it leisurely walked toward the Crouching Bull Hill.

Li Qingshan raised his head and watched the sky as he rode on the green bull. The stars were incomparably bright; it was a brilliance that didn't exist in that other world. Like an ordinary cowboy, he blew a crisp and clear tune on his flute.

The flute's sound reverberated in the early fog. Behind him the village woke up gradually.

Trees were sparse on the Crouching Bull Hill and the green grass was laid like a mattress.

Li Qingshan borrowed the faint light from the east and gazed to the west. The mountains linked themselves in uninterrupted ranges, and deeper in were the hundred thousand great mountains. Rumors had it that not only wild beasts but even spirits and ghosts haunted them, so hunters didn't dare go deep inside.

Li Qingshan had never seen a decent map in the village, and he couldn't figure out this world's geography. He only knew the mountains were incomparably tall, and the rivers incomparably vast. Even if they contained all kinds of perils, it was still a whole new world waiting for him to explore.

Li Qingshan had already made his decision to leave, and in the end he patted the green bull's back a few times.

“Elder brother bull, elder brother bull, you're already so old, if I sold you others would certainly cut you up and eat your meat. These skies are broad and the lands are vast, so wander forth. There are many savage beasts in the mountains, you be careful.”

At this time, the smartest thing to do was to sell the green bull and gather some travel expenses. He'd also have some guarantees in Suncheer City, or else he might fall down in hunger and die in the streets. But he refused to do such.

Any farmer would laugh if they heard of such childish practices, but this was his resolve.

“You already call me big brother, how can I bear to part ways?”

“One may send off a guest for a thousand miles, but the time will still come to say good...bye...” Li Qingshan answered instinctively, but his voice became lower bit by bit. He stared at the green bull with round eyes and felt like all the hairs on his body had stood up. He retreated a step: “Evil spirit!”

The green bull said: “Don’t be afraid, I won’t harm you.”

Anyway they’d gotten along for so many years so Li Qingshan wasn’t actually very afraid, but he just couldn’t accept this surreal scene for a while. But after thinking about all he had gone through, he also calmed down and tentatively probed with a frown: “Are you really elder brother bull?”

The green bull saw him calm down so fast and nodded its bullhead in praise: “Worthy of someone with innate wisdom.”

“What innate wisdom?” Li Qingshan immediately became wary. He absolutely didn’t want others to discover his status of a world-crosser. He remembered that while he could usually still pretend in front of the villagers, he wasn’t so guarded in front of this green bull, and his attitude didn’t match his status and age. He never thought that the bull had already seen it clearly.

“Occasionally some people will retain memories of their former life through the six paths of reincarnation, this is precisely called innate wisdom.”

“I see.” Li Qingshan relaxed slightly. He had also heard about this kind of things, but at least his world-crosser identity wasn’t yet exposed: “I didn’t expect that this world would really have monsters and evil spirits. I even fed and took care of you for a dozen years, why didn’t you speak before?”

“There’s not much to say. I don’t ask you where you come from, you don’t ask me where I come from. It’s enough for you to know

what I can give you.”

“Give me...what?”

“Have you heard about supernatural powers?”

The green bull didn't wait for Li Qingshan's questions and continued to say: “The so-called ‘supernatural powers’ are the means of demon and gods who know all under heaven. Down below you can shift mountains and fill up the sea, up above you can gather the stars and hold the moon. You can live long if you desire a long life, and if you wish for immortality you can obtain immortality. Let alone glory and wealth, gold and women, those you can obtain in passing. Are you tempted?”

This “supernatural” word simply contained all the longings of every living person. Li Qingshan was also but one in the crowd, how could he not be tempted?

The deeper feeling was incredulity, like a person blind for a more than a dozen years suddenly opening his eyes. Everything in front of his eyes was so dazzling and fascinating, and he was filled with an unreal sensation.

Li Qingshan restrained his heart's excitement: “Elder brother bull, you want to teach me supernatural powers?”

The green bull shook its head: “You're not qualified right now.” Then it changed the topic: “If you want to cultivate supernatural

powers, first you have to eat meat!”

“What?” Li Qingshan wondered if he had heard wrong. He felt a burst of absurdity, supernatural skills that could move mountains, fill the sea, gather the stars and the moon, how did they get tangled together with these ordinary matters?

“The first step to cultivation is to “refine vitality and produce qi,” refine the yuan essence in the body and transform it into true qi. With your yellow face and emaciated body, where would you find yuan essence to refine?”

Li Qingshan smiled bitterly. No one who grew up and matured like him could have become robust. And for a man who struggled to carry a bucket of water to talk about shifting mountains and filling the sea, wasn’t that ridiculous?

“I dare ask, where does the meat comes from?” How would Li Qingshan not want to eat meat? Compared to illusory immortal pills and spirit herbs, the taste of meat was truly engraved in his brain, making him dream of it at midnight and endlessly cherish the memories.

But where would a kid who couldn’t even eat his fill of coarse grains find meat to eat? He couldn’t stop himself from staring at elder brother bull’s plump bull body, subconsciously cutting it in his head in tenderloin, ribs, t-bone and many other parts. His eyes shone green with envy.

The green bull hit his head: “Don’t get any idea about me.” It

boldly lifted its hoof and pointed to the hundred thousand great mountains in the west: “The meat is right there.”

Li Qingshan wasn't happy but rather afraid instead. Was it so easy to be a hunter in this world? The mountain beasts weren't mere trifles. Moreover there was the living example of the green bull standing in front of him. Those legends about ghosts and demons weren't empty words it seemed. If he randomly crossed the path of one of those, he would have to hand over his poor life.

But the green bull only told him not to worry and go home, then wind rose under its hooves and it left without a trace.

Li Qingshan went alone down the hill, the excitement in his heart still hard to quiet down. This world was unexpectedly filled with so much bedazzling strange things and colorful beauty. If he could really cultivate the dao of the immortals and tread across the green hills, then it wouldn't be a waste of this name he gave himself.

Li Qingshan returned back to his house. His Big Brother Li had already gone to the fields, and only his sister-in-law was there, leaning on the door and eating melon seeds. She rolled her eyes when she saw him. Usually when men went to work in the fields, womenfolk would do chores in the house or weave clothes to earn some pocket money, but she was famous in the village for being a lazy wench. She threw all the chores to Li Qingshan, and as to the loom, she'd never even touched one.

Li Qingshan only pretended to turn a blind eye. He went straight inside and opened the lid of the cooking pot. Don't mention hot dishes or warm rice, there wasn't even cold leftovers.

Li Eldest's wife said eccentrically: "Our family doesn't raise idle people, why don't you quickly take the bull and go work at Steward Liu's place?" Then she suddenly remembered: "The bull?"

Chapter 2: Eat Meat And Cultivate

“Lost it.” Li Qingshan answered with a hard voice, like someone pulled back to the cruel reality from a fascinating daydream.

“Go find it quickly, you dare to lose our family’s bull. Let’s see if your brother won’t beat you to death, you spendthrift thing. If the bull’s lost, you can also get lost!”

“It’s my bull!” Li Qingshan walked out of the door in great strides. He was afraid he’d beat up this wench if he still didn’t leave, but if he really did this then he couldn’t stay in the house anymore. He couldn’t find another shelter to stay in either. Beggars couldn’t be choosers.

He went back to the bullpen only after sunset, utterly exhausted. His bright eyes swept around the empty bullpen, then dimmed again.

Li Qingshan’s everyday work, apart from chores and taking care of the bull, was to take the bull and help the work at the landlord’s house, so he could make a little money for his family.

Today he had no bull for the whole day, so he could only do the same work as the other hired hands. This was work that even adults found exhausting, not to mention a teenager like him, and he didn’t even eat any breakfast.

Compared to the body’s fatigue, the insults and curses of the farm’s steward were trivial ordinary things. He fell head first on

the stack of hay and didn't want to think about anything anymore, but his belly started gurgling.

You could imagine, in this kind of environment, even if you had lofty aspirations they would be worn away beyond recognition, leaving only the body's most basic instincts behind.

While Li Qingshan was half-asleep, he heard the “bang” of something heavy falling. He opened his eyes and saw a strange face, with a row of fangs both long and white. He jumped in fright, and only after waking up completely did he notice it was a wild boar dead not long ago, still radiating warmth.

The green bull was crouching in front of the trough, watching him with a “laugh.” He could already faintly distinguish the expressions on the green bull's face.

The curtain of the night fell. In a village house Big Wife Li was complaining to Big Brother Li: “This small bastard, he really doesn't look like anything, he unexpectedly lost such a big bull, no, he must have secretly sold it. Impossible, he must go live by himself, or he'll surely harm us if he continues like this.”

Big brother Li was over thirty years old, built tall and strong, and was a famous bully in the village. But he was very humble with his young wife: “He can leave, but those [several mu's](#) of good land have been distributed to him in front of the village elders.” They had used the pretext of Li Qingshan being too young and unable to work the farm to occupy this piece of land. Now they still hadn't given it back, but if Li Qingshan officially left they would be forced to.

A mu is a Chinese surface unit equivalent to a 1/15th of an acre.

“Isn’t steward Liu always after this piece of land? Just sell it to him, if this little bastard has guts he can go ask it back from him.”

“But what if he doesn’t agree to sell?”

“Starve him for three days, do you worry he’ll still refuse?”

Big Wife Li suddenly sniffed while the two were in the middle of their discussion: “Do you smell something?”

“Smells really good, looks like someone’s cooking meat.”

“It’s not the new year or a festival, what cooking meat. Looks like, looks like, it’s very close.”

The two people followed the smell and came to the bullpen. Inside they saw a pot hanging over a fire, and a thick soup boiling in the pot, scattering a fragrant smell around.

The light of the fire swayed in the darkness, casting Li Qingshan’s shadow on the walls.

Sister-in-law Li swallowed her saliva: “You little brat, where did you steal the meat?” She wasn’t only lazy but also greedy. Looking at this meat soup she even forgot about Li Qingshan offending her, and she went up, stirring the pot with the ladle.

Big brother Li on the other hand had sharp eyes and saw with one glance the thing Li Qingshan was sitting on, exclaiming: “Wild boar!”

Wild boars could be said to be extremely dangerous things in the mountains. They had tough skin, thick muscles and they were hard to wound with blades. Ordinary hunters would give way and retreat if they met one, to say nothing of catching them.

“I picked it up at the foot of the mountains when I was looking for the bull. It was injured, it was probably forced in a tight spot by hunters.”

Li Qingshan told them the pretext he had prepared beforehand. He absolutely had to keep the green bull’s existence a secret, otherwise if the rumor of a monster bull spread out, more likely than not some celestial temple would come knocking at his door.

Big Brother Li was half-believing and half-dubious. He also smiled: “Brother you really have the dumb luck of a dumb person, wait until I drag this boar to the market, I can sell it for a good price for sure. We’ll store the money to find a wife for you.” At the same time he also saw the green bull inside the bullpen, thinking in his heart that now they weren’t in a rush to kick him out. Wasn’t this bull still able to do some farm work?

Li Qingshan watchd Big Sister-in-law Li stir the pot looking like she couldn’t wait to grab a piece and have a taste, and his good mood at boiling meet was suddenly entirely ruined. He slapped Big

Wife Li's hand away: "Don't randomly touch it."

Big sister Li covered her hand and retreated, howling in grief: "Look at your little brother, you still didn't believe me when I said he takes advantage when you're not at home to bully me womenfolk. Now it's right in front of you, you can see yourself."

Bully you? Li Qingshan only felt a burst of nausea. At least if you were named [Pan](#), I wouldn't suffer a loss.

Reference to Pan Jinlian, a fictional character and a famous villainess in Chinese culture. She's an archetypical femme fatale, described as beautiful. She appears in Water Margin among others.

Big brother Li's expression became abruptly gloomy: "Is this how you treat your sister-in-law?"

Li Qingshan lowered his head and said: "I already have plans for this meat. Now I'm not so young anymore, it's time I go live on my own." This was something he was thinking about already while boiling the meat. He already had no desire to keep bowing his head under those eaves.

Big Brother Li hadn't expected Li Qingshan to raise this matter first before he could open his mouth. He was startled then became greatly angry. He was a simple-minded village fellow and wasn't someone who could keep his rage inside. He clenched his fist as he went forward, about to give Li Qingshan a beating. He'd drag this wild boar off first and see later.

Li Qingshan could see that something was amiss as he

approached. He stood up, grimness written over his face, but feeling some weakness in his heart. His body and bones weren't mature yet and he'd exhausted himself the whole day without eating anything, how could he resist a burly adult fellow. The corner of his eyes flickered toward the green bull, but the green bull was watching this scene as if watching a play, and didn't manifest any desire to help.

Right when Li Qingshan was crying bitterness in his heart and ready to get beaten, big brother Li stopped his steps, his vision falling on Li Qingshan's right hand.

This coarse big hand was holding a similarly coarse short knife with a rough blade edge that was still dull even after polishing.

This was the short knife Li Qingshan had bought at the market with the savings from living frugally for all these years. It was useful in many places, right now he used it to cut the meat.

Li Qingshan suddenly understood that his brother was afraid, not afraid of himself but afraid of this knife. Before this moment he had never realized the shoddy short knife in his hand actually had the power to deter other people.

Li Qingshan was only an ordinary student even in his former life, and although he'd fought a few times they were only conflicts between students. Even adding his two lives together he didn't have the experience of facing people with weapons.

Understanding this, Li Qingshan clenched the short knife in his

hand. He deliberately raised it like a wild beast baring its fangs, even if he radically didn't dare use this thing.

Big Brother Li immediately took a step back, Big Wife Li also didn't dare to howl so wildly anymore, and the two people unexpectedly retreated out of the bullpen, showing a very disappointed expression. They cursed outside then went back inside the house to discuss their "great plan".

Li Qingshan turned a deaf ear, and put even the meat's fragrant smell in the back of his mind. He only stared at the short knife, his face vaguely reflected within. This cheap product worth a few silvers had protected him just then, sparing him from suffering physical pain, sparing him from insults, and also preserving his spoils of war.

Although it was a matter of course, but at that moment it seemed like his mind had broadened and everything had become clear.

The green bull crouched in front of the trough and watched at him with a smile.

The light of the fire swayed and the giant black man on the wall stood holding a knife. At this precise moment, a young man understood the exact value of power.

After a long time, Li Qingshan sat down once more, tweaking his ear and scratching his cheek as he looked anxiously at the pot: "How much longer do I need to cook this meat?" Originally he was already someone who couldn't be happy without meat. Those

dozen years had really been a bitter hardship for him. When his parents were still there he could still eat a few mouthfuls during new year or holidays, but now even without mentioning his parents passing away, those few slices of meat weren't enough for Big Wife Li by herself.

At this moment even immortal pills placed in front of him wouldn't make him as impatient as this pot of meat.

The boar was a big fat boar and this pot of meat actually cooked for no less than half the night.

The soaring flame, the floating aroma, the crackling sounds, the young man concentrating all his attention, all of this condensed into a picture that wasn't lacking in sentiment and poetry, as rustic and primitive as it was.

Finally, even without sprinkling any salt, not to mention other condiments, Li Qingshan ate until he almost swallowed his tongue. No matter fat or meat, several pounds of flesh went inside his belly, and finally he even drank the meat broth clean.

If someone asked at this moment what happiness was, he would definitely answer that happiness was a pot of meat.

Chapter 3: Living Apart And Disgrace

Li Qingshan contentedly lay on the pile of hay, stretched his four limbs, and unconsciously passed out into sleep.

This night, he didn't dream of his past life.

In the house not far away from the bullpen, Big Wife Li tossed back and forth on her bed, tormented by the smell of meat and unable to fall asleep until well into the night.

The next morning, shortly after the roosters' three crows, a short fatty wearing emerald green silk garments came to the farm. He was none other than the greatest landowner of this tiny Crouching Bull Village, master Liu. He was the one Big Wife Li called Steward Liu, because he was once a steward in a great house back in the city. Now he became a minister of the main family, and returned to his home village covered in glory.

But he still insisted people call him Steward Liu, to highlight his different status from those peasants, and to distinguish him from the ordinary country bumpkin landowners. Because he had already annexed more than half of the village's land by various means, he also had the nickname "Half Village Liu ."

If you had to say what kind of ambition Half Village Liu had, then it was naturally to become Full Village Liu, but this couldn't be rushed. To borrow the words of those sirs from the city, slow and steady won the race. He was confident he could realize his wish during his lifetime, and by that time everyone in the village would

be his hired workers. He would be the emperor of this Crouching Bull Village and whatever he wanted would be.

But Steward Liu was a little unhappy right now. Not many workers were working on his residence. He waved a fat hand: “Only those few people? Where are the rest?”

A hired hand said with a smiling face: “Steward Liu, they all went to help build a house for Li the Second.”

“Li the Second? Which Li the Second?”

“It’s that cowherd boy!”

“This daddy naturally knows, where did he get the money?”

“That kid’s a lucky bastard and picked up a great wild boar, anyone in the village who agrees to help him build the house will get a big chunk of boar meat. It’s at the foot of the Crouching Bull Hill, it’s bustling right now.”

“Why didn’t you go?”

“I fell out with him.” The worker said a little embarrassed, his heart extremely sad. This was meat, meat! How could he afford to eat it in ordinary times?

Steward Liu pinched his brow and said: “Go, let’s see what’s

going on.”

As soon as he had woken up, Li Qingshan began planning about the matter of separating from his family. The top priority was to build a decent house for himself. He couldn't rely on someone else's charity.

He didn't have the capacity before, but with this fat boar many things were easily solved. With a little greeting many people came to help. It could be said that he finally experienced the magic of pig meat in this world.

Under the Crouching Bull Hill, willow trees offered shade and flowers were bright; the scenery was beautiful. Put in his previous world, this kind of place would be a tourist attraction or a wealthy man's mansion, when would it be his turn to occupy it? Moreover this place was away from the village and it was easier to conceal his secrets. He could be at ease when he communicated with the green bull.

Li Qingshan was standing in the crowd and giving commands back and forth, an unspeakable pleasure in his heart. He understood a little the hidden meaning when the green bull said to eat meat. It wasn't only to strengthen his body.

Someone with no food nor clothes had to run hither and fro like a headless chicken to eat his fill, where would he have the focus to do other things? To say nothing about what comprehending his own heart.

Steward Liu stood in the distance and swept his glance around, mumbling to himself: “So this means them brothers are going to separate.” But he happened to see Big Wife Li also watching in the distance, not only not happy to see her family’s brother emancipating to his own house but gnashing her teeth in rage instead. A scheme hatched in his mind and he went forward with a smile.

Not much more than ten days later, a new house was built and many people received boar meat as they dispersed.

Li Qingshan watched his new residence with satisfaction as he stood in the small courtyard. Although it was only an ordinary house made of mud bricks and a thatched roof, this still was his new home. It was the first step he took in this world to settle down and pursue his ambitions.

Those few days he’d continued to eat meat and his face had regained its rosiness. Standing there he also looked more confident. Although it was only a dozen days of work, his body had grown a few inches out of nowhere.

Right when Li Qingshan was being happy, an old woman with white hair and coarse skin paced into the courtyard, appearing to jump in fright: “Li the Second, this house of yours is built wrong, it’s very ominous!”

Li Qingshan frowned. This was the witch who force-fed him blessed water when he was a child. She acted mystical all day long and scammed people, fooling those ignorant villagers. He didn’t have any goodwill toward her, but her prestige was high in the

village. Any funeral or marriage in the village would invite her to cast a divination, and of course her divinations naturally required offerings to the gods.

Li Qingshan also didn't dare slighting her, and paid her a ceremonial greeting: "Why did your honored self come?"

The witch didn't even look at him and glanced left right in the house: "There's a shady air here, there's evil spirits, fortunately I was ready." She held a jar in one hand and a willow twig in the other. She dipped the willow twig in the water inside the jar, and randomly sprinkled it inside the house and in the yard while shouting chaotically: "Quickly go away, quickly go away..."

Li Qingshan couldn't block her and could only allow her nonsense. Although he already believed in ghosts and gods now, by no mean he believed there was what gloomy air evil spirit inside. He had a bona fide evil spirit following at his side, and if there was really something wrong the green bull would naturally tell him, when would it be her turn?

After the witch sprinkled her water, she acted like she gave some big help to Li Qingshan and rambled on and on, what Li Qingshan's luck was entirely bestowed by the gods, so now was the time to pay the gods back. The best offering to the gods was naturally the wild boar.

Li Qingshan finally understood why she came and said: "I'm afraid it's not the gods who want to eat it, but it's you who want to eat it, right?"

Facing Li Qingshan's small disrespect, the witch went into a great anger. She stood upright and used another kind of voice to say: "Li Qingshan, if you don't listen to this god's advice, you'll face disaster."

Li Qingshan knew this was her divine possession trick. Usually when villagers saw it, even those with big guts were scared witless. They would kneel down and prostrate themselves. Even the original Li Qingshan didn't dare to completely ignore it, but now was different from the past. He crossed his arms like he was watching a comedy: "There's no door to luck or misfortune, man brings them upon himself. What relation does it have with gods? Your honored self please leave!"

The witch saw that this trick unexpectedly had no effect, and awkwardly restored her former appearance, saying in a sinister tone: "You just wait!"

Not long after the witch left, disaster really came.

A villager invited Li Qingshan to go to the ancestral hall. Although the village was small, the rules were many. The matter of him separating from his brother ought to require his attendance in the ancestral hall, and make a clear separation in front of the village elders. But it should have been at his request, did his brother go ahead first?

Li Qingshan faintly felt uneasy. The green bull had gone off who knew where, so he had to bite the bullet.

The so-called ancestral hall was merely a small house with a deep archway, but it was one of the rare stone buildings in the village, and the inside was consecrated to the memorial tablets of the ancestors of the Li and Liu clans.

Inside the pitch-black room, several old people were separated on the left and right sides. The one acting as the leader was the village chief of the Crouching Bull Village, his age over sixty, his body crooked to an unsightly degree. He was also from the Li clan and according to seniority Li Qingshan even had to call him grandfather.

Big Wife Li was already waiting inside and she fiercely glared at Li Qingshan when she saw him, like Li Qingshan somehow harmed them. She faintly carried an expression of taking pleasure in revenge.

Li Qingshan paid her no heed and offered a ceremonial greeting to the elders, then under the presiding of the village chief he started the ceremony to separate from his family.

Li Qingshan originally thought the only thing he had was the green bull and a few mus of farmland, so he didn't expect that reality was much more complicated than he'd imagined.

The village chief's face looked stern and fair as he distributed random items to Li Qingyan, meticulous to the point of attributing him a spoon or a pair of chopsticks.

Every time he mentioned something, Big Wife Li twitched painfully, and her vision became more vicious whenever it fell Li Qingshan.

Li Qingshan remained unmoved, his face calm and collected. Those random living items were all useful, sparing him the effort of purchasing them again.

The village chief only stopped after the distribution had gone on for over an hour. He glanced left and right with his muddy eyes: “Do you have anything you don’t agree with?”

Even big sister-in-law Li was convinced, but Li Qingshan felt something was wrong: “Grandfather, what about the farmland?”

“What farmland?”

Li Qingshan was stunned. Back when his parents passed away, they made things very clear in front of this very man. They were precisely afraid his elder brother would bully him, so they wanted this person of high prestige in the village to establish fairness.

Big Wife Li already said things in the open: “You’re small and ignorant of some matters, those two old things didn’t payback the silver they borrowed, and the land has long been given as compensation.”

Li Qingshan was greatly agitated and furious: “What did you call my parents, say it again?” Although he didn’t have very deep

feelings for them, they still were his parents in this world, how could he tolerate someone wantonly insulting them in front of the crowd?

Big Brother Li put his body in front of Big Wife Li. Several burly men also came in from outside the ancestral hall, obviously well prepared in advance.

Li Qingshan noticed that those people were all scoundrels of the village. Usually they went around stealing chickens and dogs, oppressing the people. They wouldn't care about friendly sentiments between people of the same village and wouldn't show any mercy when they acted.

The village chief silently cursed "stupid wench" and sighed: "I've already examined the contract."

"Where's the contract?"

Big Brother Li said: "We already burned it when we took it back."

"Who was the one owed money?"

Big Wife Li proudly said: "The village's Steward Liu, if you dare just go find him, let's see if Steward Liu won't peel off your skin. This old mother is precisely bullying you little ungrateful bastard, what about it?" That farmland was all fertile fields, and they sold for a lot of silver, so it could count as compensation for not being able to eat the boar meat. She decided to buy a chicken and eat it as

soon as she went home.

Li Qingshan was furious to the point he was trembling all over, and his fingernails stabbed into his palms.

With his experience from two worlds, how could he not know the inside story? Farmers regarded their soil as their lifeblood, how could they casually give it to others as compensation? His parents had also spent a lifetime in the fields, how could they borrow silver?

They clearly banded together to bully him. Without the land, if he wanted to keep eating and survive, he could only go to Steward Liu's residence and become a hired hand, so even if he had a sky-vast anger he still had to repress it. It was really a good plan.

Li Qingshan was treated coldly at home by his brother and sister-in-law, but it was at most eating and dressing badly. He could accept it, but how was it inverting black and white like this? In his former life he had gone through the internet and believed that he had seen the darkest shades of society. He had even joined in the indignant cursing.

But only now he realized how difficult it was to bear when this kind of things fell over his own head.

If he complied he would have no more chance to appeal, even if he was only obeying the village's arrangement.

Chapter 4: Drunkenness And Murder

The atmosphere in the ancestral hall stiffened up. The village chief's face sank like cold water: "What, Li the Second, you're not satisfied with my arrangement?" Those several scoundrels already started to rub their fists and roll up their sleeves. The bald leader even drew out a chopper.

The other elder people either closed their eyes, or urged him: "Little Second, don't sulk and act rashly." "The arm can't twist the thigh, David can't fight against Goliath." "Steward Liu even promised to hire you as a worker in his mansion and give you a bit more money, whatever happens you won't starve."

Li Qingshan vaguely replied something. He had no idea how he got out of the ancestral hall. When he came out that baldy even tripped him and he almost fell, leaving behind him bouts of great laughter.

On the way he met the witch. She was laughing proudly: "Disaster, disaster, it's still not too late to pay your respects to the gods."

Li Qingshan returned back to the new house at the foot of the Crouching Bull Hill and lay down face first, not half a bit of happiness inside his heart.

The sun fell below the western mountains, the color of the sky fell to dusk, the chicken clucks and the dog barks also gradually quieted, and the village restored its calm.

The green bull strolled in from outside. Li Qingshan raised his body, about to speak, but the green bull actually said: “I saw everything, but I didn’t help you.”

“I wasn’t planning on asking for your help, I also don’t care about those few pieces of land, I only...”

“Can’t swallow this anger?”

“Yes.”

“Not distinguishing black from white, overturning right and wrong, these kind of things are many under the sky. At times even immortal Buddhas and great saints with powers that pierce through the heavens suffer grievances and humiliation, not to mention you tiny mortal. What does your small anger count as?”

Li Qingshan stared: “But I don’t want to bear and suffer in silence.” He suddenly remembered the short knife again.

The green bull watched him in silence for a long time, then suddenly laughed: “Good good good, not wanting to bear and suffer is the right way. A man of character frankly avenges grief and grudges. The benevolence of a single meal must be repaid, the enmity of a single angry stare requires reprisal. I originally saw your willpower wearing down these years, but surprisingly you still have some of the vigor of a young man in your chest. Only this way is worthy of my teaching.”

Li Qingshan stared blankly: “You were testing me?”

The green bull sniffed through its nose and said: “This also count as a test? Isn’t it only asking you kid which road you want to walk?”

“Which road?” Li Qingshan didn’t understand the meaning.

“The daos of the world are countless many, there’s the dao of swallowing insults and putting your life before principles, there’s also the dao of raising one’s weapon and die fighting. Men have human dao, monsters have monster dao, gods have divine dao, ghosts have ghost dao, each dao has its own scenery, each dao has its own choices.”

Li Qingshan heard his incessant “dao” and directly felt his head spin, don’t tell me you’re going to sing me “[Dao Dao Dao](#)” next? After listening for a while, he flatly interrupted: “I seek my own dao!”

The green bull first stared then became happy: “You actually understand, that’s right, great daos are countless many, you seek your own dao.” He took out a big gourd from who knew where. The gourd flew on its own to Li Qingshan’s hand: “Since you don’t want to bear in silence and swallow this anger, I’ll teach you how.”

Li Qingshan felt a heavy weight in his hand and some kind of liquid sloshed inside. He pulled out the gourd’s cork and a waft of alcohol assaulted him.

Li Qingshan smiled wryly. After eating meat, did he actually need to drink booze? It looked very reasonable, but who depended on these two things to cultivate? If eating meat and drinking alcohol was enough to become an immortal then every rich man under the sky would be an immortal. Could it be that immortals were all good-for-nothing gluttons?

The green bull only said eight words: “Meat reinforces the body, alcohol strengthens your courage.”

Li Qingshan clenched his teeth, lifted his head, then gulp gulp poured the booze down. It was merely the village’s rice wine, but when this gourd of wine rushed in his belly he also felt the sky spin and the earth go round. His eyes stared straight at the green bull. Was this to drink his worries away?

“Go kill someone and I’ll teach you cultivation.” The green bull spoke very calmly like he was talking about some insignificant thing, then crouched down.

Li Qingshan felt a chill course through his back. He suddenly realized that in front of him wasn’t an industrious old farm bull that had accompanied him for over a dozen years, but a genuine evil bull spirit monster. The so-called teaching was definitely not the modest and gentle dao of immortal Buddhas, but the vicious and tyrannical dao of monsters and demons.

It still hadn’t taught him any supernatural skill and only told him to eat meat, drink booze, and now he had to kill someone.

Was he really going to kill someone? Many faces floated in front of his eyes. He hated those people, and wished he could kill them, but he knew he didn't dare to do so. The green bull also knew that, that's why it gave him wine to fortify his guts.

Was this a blood pledge or the rite to become an apprentice?

Remembering today's tribulations, the wine went to his head and his anger overflowed. Li Qingshan lifted his head and deeply breathed in, then lowered his head back: "Kill who?"

"That's your problem, let's agree first, I'm not going to help you, I won't rescue you either, I'm just an ordinary bull."

The present night's moonlight was bright and cheerful, throwing a layer of frosty white on the ground. Li Qingshan walked alone on the white frost, and seeing the round moon's dazzling shine overhead, he couldn't wait for a patch of gloomy clouds to cover it.

Stillness reigned inside the village. Li Qingshan's footsteps wobbled in the village as he walked randomly, his heart blank.

The clamor of human voices came from inside a broken house as he went near. Li Qingshan could hear them clearly, it was precisely the scoundrels from the ancestral hall today. He hurriedly squatted at the foot of the wall and listened to what they were talking about.

"This wine came really easy today, we only had to go stand in the

ancestral for a bit, but steward Liu gave us so much rewards.”

Li Qingshan immediately recognized this voice. Baldy Liu, a famous rogue in the village, idling all day and stealing chickens and dogs. His temperament was perverse and cruel, and he always carried a chopper knife with him. Everyone in the village was a little afraid of him, and even if he was caught stealing they didn't dare do anything to him. The other scoundrels also considered him their boss.

“It's all big brother's power and prestige, didn't you see the kid's face, he was scared white.” There was a burst of laughter in the house.

Li Qingshan had no idea how his face looked back then, but right now it was definitely bright red. The alcohol mixed with his anger and directly rushed to his head.

“Too bad that wimp didn't do anything. I haven't exercised my fists and legs for a while, originally I was ready to use him for some practice. This damn boy never took me seriously.”

Li Qingshan was a man of two worlds and was merely not as afraid of him as ordinary villagers. He didn't expect he'd attract this kind of animosity.

“Isn't it easy if big brother wants to beat him up? This dumbass built his house outside the village, it'll be simple to cover our heads and have us bros beat him good. We'll take his bull too, drag it to the market and sell it, we can still get some wine money in

exchange.”

The other scoundrels all agreed.

Li Qingshan spit out an inebriated breath and gripped tightly the short knife in his bosom.

Baldy Liu drank a bellyful of wine and came outside the house for a piss, but he didn't go back to the house and instead walked on a small path toward the south of the village.

Li Qingshan felt curious and stood up to follow. He came to the famous Widow Liu's door and shouted at her to open the door. Li Qingshan realized then what he wanted to do.

The door was tightly shut and there wasn't even light inside. She was obviously afraid of him. There were also several hovels not far away, but surprisingly no one paid any attention.

Baldy Liu borrowed the drunken mood to say a bunch of obscenities, violently kicking the door a few times. He threw curses and insults for a while, attracting loud barks from the village dogs, and only then turned around and left.

Widow Liu calmed down inside the door and secretly looked outside through the door's seams. She saw that Baldy Liu had indeed gone far away and became relieved, but then a shadow swayed in her eyes and a silhouette followed tightly behind Baldy Liu. The night was dark and she couldn't clearly see the clothes or

appearance, so she took him as a follower, although she faintly felt something wrong.

Li Qingshan followed Baldy Liu to a deserted place. Violence suddenly emerged in his heart and he shouted loudly, fiercely throwing himself forward.

Baldy Liu turned his head back in great surprise and saw a dark and dull knife piercing straight at him. He suddenly half-woke from his drunken stupor, trying to escape and counterattack, but his hands and feet were without strength. Usually he just held a knife and intimidated ordinary people. He also fought a few fistfights, but when did he experience a genuine battle for life and death? Although the opponent was a youngster, the decisiveness and murderous aura assaulted him like it was a fierce beast from the mountains.

Without any resistance a knife went into a body. Li Qingshan also didn't expect the usually swaggering Baldy Liu to be so useless. Seeing Baldy Liu's frightened and imploring face, he seemed to be even drunker and his eyes faintly radiated a red light. His head seemed to stop spinning and only the movement of his hand didn't stop.

The glint of the knife and the light of blood danced wildly in the darkness.

When Li Qingshan calmed down, Baldy Liu was already in a pool of blood, dead til he couldn't die again. A thick odor of blood floated in this moonlit night, also exposing a little the flavor of coldness.

Li Qingshan forcefully calmed himself, then turned around and went away, running in one breath to the stream at the foot of the Crouching Bull Hill. He borrowed the reflection of the water flow and couldn't help but be frightened: "Is this still me?"

The water reflected a young man covered by traces of blood all over his body, pursing his lips. His eyes were round, and he still carried a murderous aura that hadn't entirely dissipated, looking very terrifying.

Li Qingshan cupped icy water and washed off the blood from his body, only then returning back to his mud house. Without caring about the green bull crouching to one side, he fell face down on the bed.

At this moment his hands started to tremble and cold sweat fiercely poured out from all of his body, soaking his clothes through. He was entirely awakened from the wine.

The green bull asked with a laugh: "You're not escaping?" as if it wasn't the one that made Li Qingshan kill someone.

Li Qingshan said: "Killing this kind of things, do I still need to escape?" Choosing Baldy Liu wasn't only an impulse on the spur of the moment. The wretch was bad to the bone and no one in the village would stick his head out for him. If the people didn't raise the matter the government wouldn't investigate, and as long as he didn't leave too compromising evidences, the murder of this kind of person would most likely end up unsolved.

The praise in the green bull's eyes was deeper. It was easy to find a man who killed in anger, but to know who to kill, who not to kill, how to preserve himself while killing someone, this was very much not so easy. Even if he was faking his calm and composure, it was still easy to see this child's resolve.

Li Qingshan couldn't hide his trembling hands from its eyes, but in its eyes it was not only not shameful. Vicious people who thought nothing about murder could be found everywhere, but to be able to repress the anxiousness and fear until now was really something.

After a long while, the green bull said: "How are you feeling?"

"Really frightened, really satisfied!" Those were true words coming from Li Qingshan's heart. After the fear went away there was an unspeakable contentment, and the anger stagnating in his chest evaporated at least half. Remembering back when he read "Water Margin," Panther Head Lin [hiding from the snowstorm in the temple](#), Wu the Second splashing blood on [Mandarin Ducks Tower](#), it was this kind of feeling.

Lin Chong was taking shelter in a broken temple when he heard people talking outside. He secretly listened and realized they tried to kill him by burning the depot he was supposed to be in. He rushed out and killed them.

Wu Song was framed and arrested for theft. Those who framed him had bribed the guards to kill him on the way to the prison, but Wu Song killed them, then returned to kill the framers in front of the Mandarin Ducks Tower. He then wrote "Wu Song is the killer" on the wall with their blood.

The green bull laughed: “You quickly sleep, we have many things to do tomorrow!”

Li Qingshan’s heart jumped and he let through an expression of joy: “You’re saying...”

Chapter 5: Nine Bulls And Two Tigers

The green bull didn't answer and closed its eyes.

Li Qingshan lay on the bed, and although he kept his face calm, he couldn't control the wild surges of his emotions. He couldn't fall asleep until half the night was past, but when the tightness in his heart finally relaxed down, he suddenly felt even more exhausted than after a whole day of farm work, and immediately sank into sleep.

That night, he dreamed he was facing ten thousand enemies and killing through them until their corpses piled into a mountain that covered the sun, the sea of blood submerging the stars.

The dream receded like a tide when he woke up. The sunlight brightly shone inside, already well into the morning.

Baldy Liu's death was like a drop of cold water in a pan of frying oil. It stirred great waves in the village. This wretch did many evils in the village and finally died. Ordinary people all clapped their hands and offered praises, talking about retribution.

But next was guessing who did it? Those who had hatred with Baldy Liu were many, but those who dared to take revenge were few. There was no secret in a small village, and after one turn in their mind the villagers thought about what happened the previous day in the ancestral hall. As it happened, that person hadn't come to see the ruckus yet, confirming the guesses of those people even more.

“Li the Second killed someone.”

“Look at him not making a sound usually, he actually had this kind of courage.”

“He’s probably fled by now already.”

In the midst of the quiet conversation voices, there was the pale white face of Big Wife Li. Steward Liu and Village Chief Li had faces sinking like cold water, and the other scoundrels were even more scared until their feet became soft. If the previous night they had been the one to go out, could they be the one lying there now?

A voice exclaimed in alarm: “Li the Second came!” The crowd voluntarily opened a way. Li Qingshan walked in great strides under the public stare and came beside Baldy Liu’s corpse. Last night was dark and he didn’t feel it, but today with a single glance he felt that the appearance of death was terrifying. But he didn’t expose anything on his face in the slightest and only said : “Good thing he died.” His eyes gazed left and right, sweeping across the crowd.

Everybody felt that Li Qingshan seemed to have become another person in the space of a single night, become a little fearsome. Everyone he looked at felt a chill on their back, even more so for those involved who jumped in fright.

Village Chief Li said: “Tie up Li the Second and carry him to the ancestral hall.”

The Crouching Bull Village was really far from the city, and they were more or less in a state of autonomy. Anything that happened in the village was decided by the village elders after discussion. Even in a murder case, they had to first arrest the person and send him to the government offices. It was no use hoping that the great lords of the government office would travel mountains and wade through water for several dozens of miles to come take someone from this broken place. Therefore they had almost no contact with the government and directly dealt punishment in the village.

There was a disturbance among the crowd of villagers. Li Qingshan frowned and shouted: "Who dares?" Even though he didn't have a weapon in his hand, he exposed the prestige and might of murder like a sword coming out of its sheathe, baring its sharp edge.

None of the villagers came forward, but it was more than fear of Li Qingshan. There was a balance inside everyone's mind, even more so for the rustic villagers: village chief you collude with tyrants in such a manner and bully honest people, what right do you have to order us? Everyone in the village saw the Second son grow up, he even calls you grandfather, you're really something to act against him. This Baldy Liu committed crimes that couldn't be erased even after death, the Second son got rid of harm for every villager.

"This Baldy Liu drank himself drunk and tripped to death, what does it have to with the Second son?" The one who spoke was Fifth Brother Zhang who had big grievances with Baldy Liu. Baldy Liu had taken advantage when he went to the fields and intentionally bullied his wife. At that time he'd wished nothing better than to

fight to death with this wretch, but his wife painstakingly persuaded him not to. Today seeing his body lying down dead, there was an unspeakable satisfaction in his heart.

Someone immediately echoed: “Right, right, he tripped to death, it’s retribution from the heavens.”

At once voices rose up confusedly, all saying that Baldy Liu died accidentally, completely ignoring the small holes on Baldy Liu’s body. Their gaze when looking at Liu Qingshan carried a little more respect.

Li Qingshan was suddenly moved, so this was the so-called public opinion.

Village Chief Li knew that if he continued like this, his prestige in the village would be greatly disturbed, and he was also truly a little afraid of Li Qingshan’s revenge. If he had known before this kid was so vicious, he certainly wouldn’t have crooked his mouth just for the sake of some silver. The villagers didn’t listen to his commands, while the other scoundrels were even worse than ordinary people and had already sneaked off secretly.

He only glanced once at Steward Liu. He should have been able to command his servants and workers, but Steward Liu only turned a blind eye. Anyway it was originally because Li the Eldest absolutely wanted to sell him the land. He’d never stuck his face out, he had a great house and great industries, so why would he clash with this kind of powerful man over such a trivial thing? Moreover a slight carelessness could arouse public anger, it was even more harm than good.

Unconsciously he'd already started to treat Li Qingshan as a powerful man.

"Possessed by evil spirits, possessed by evil spirits, I warned beforehand, I warned beforehand." The witch suddenly pointed at Li Qingshan and howled.

The expression of every villager greatly changed, and they subconsciously retreated farther away from Li Qingshan.

Li Qingshan went forward and kicked her down: "You old thief, until when are you going to falsely accuse me. I'll tear your mouth off if you dare to say one more word."

The witch uttered "aiyo" and didn't dare talk any longer, only staring him with bitter eyes.

Li Qingshan was calm and fearless: "If you really have supernatural powers, let your gods and demons come find me, let's see if I'm afraid of them." His words done, he walked out of the crowd with his head held high. He directly went somewhere with no one around, and dispersed the momentum he carried just now. He could sense his heart beating fiercely, but he knew he made the right decision.

If he'd hidden inside his house out of fear and given Village Chief Li time to gather the villagers, he would probably have been captured before nightfall. With his current physique, he couldn't resist against a few burly fellows. He could only be genuinely safe

and sounds by taking risks and pressuring the people with his momentum, then obtain the public opinion.

The green bull was already waiting for a long time when he went back to the mud house. It looked up and down at Li Qingshan.

Li Qingshan also felt the strange atmosphere. He went forward and deferentially gave his respects, then raised his head and asked with a smile: “Elder brother bull, do I still need to arrange a feast to formally become your apprentice?”

The green bull said: “Your wine and meat, didn’t I give them all to you? You’re still talking about a feast for becoming master and apprentice.”

Li Qingshan spread his hands and said: “I’ll help you get some tender grass, won’t that do?”

The green bull’s eyes became heavy: “Not joking with you, I only taught you this art of murder because you had already stored a heart of murder. In the future you won’t be lacking in struggles, and you won’t see another peaceful day. The day your abilities are lacking, and you find yourself killed, you can only die with no complaints.”

“The strong prey on the weak, it’s the same anywhere you go. I don’t dare to say no complaints, just no regrets.”

The green bull said: “No regrets, well said. Since you’ve made up

your mind, I'll pass on to you a set of [Bull Demon Strong Fist]. When you can train to the strength of one bull and establish your foundations, I'll give you the [Tiger Demon Bone Refining Fist]. When you cultivate the two techniques together, you can learn a daoist supernatural skill 'Strength of Nine Bulls and Two Tigers', by that time you'll be able to run rampant in the human world."

"Strength of Nine Bulls and Two Tigers?" Li Qingshan felt it was too ordinary when he heard. Nine tigers and two bulls, what's extraordinary with that, those were the most ordinary of domestic animals or wild beasts. Could they also be worthy of being called a supernatural skill and run riot across the human world?

But thinking carefully, he was shocked. He had taken care of the bull for more than a dozen years, and had a deep knowledge of how great the strength of a bull was. One bull's strength could resist ten strong men, if he could only obtain one bull's strength, he could don armor and hold a spear, kill through a battlefield, and be worthy of the name of a fierce general.

Nine bulls and two tigers weren't anything exceptional, but if that strength all combined inside a man's body, he would have a power of tens of thousand pounds with the lift of his hand, who would be able to stop him? Even if [Lu Bu](#) were to be reborn and [Li Yuanba](#) to come to this world, they couldn't block a light punch of his.

Character from the Three Kingdoms era. Seen in modern culture as the strongest fighter in that era due to the novel Romance of the Three Kingdoms.

Fictional character said to be the greatest out of the 18 (fictional) great warriors of the Sui-Tang period, first mentioned in the novel

Shuo Tang. Li Yuanba wields two 200kg hammers and is said to be extreme strong and extremely dumb, almost like a berserker. Some novels even mention him as a warrior that can only be matched by Xiang Yu, said to be the greatest fighter in Chinese history.

“But since it’s a daoist skill, why are they called bull demons tiger demons?”

“This technique was originally a technique from ancient times, it’s already lost nowadays.”

Li Qingshan was excited when he heard the two words “ancient times.” To his knowledge, any spiritual pills or herbs, secret books or treasures, as long as they had some relationship with those two words, they would all be powerful beyond compare.

But the green bull’s following explanation made him greatly disappointed, because the reason this technique had been lost was because it was too difficult to use, and it was replaced by divine skills created by later generations geniuses. In short it had been eliminated by natural selection.

Although sages of ancient times were admittedly strong, there was no reason later generations couldn’t measure up to previous generations, even more so as they stood on the shoulders of the previous generations.

“The cultivators back then attached more importance to training qi and less importance on training the body to the point of considering it mortal flesh, so they would naturally not pay any

attention anymore to this kind of technique pursuing brute force.”

“Heh, don’t be too disappointed, the supernatural skill I’m teaching you is already not the same as the original. It was improved by an almighty member of the monster clan, that’s the reason it’s called bull demon tiger demon. Bull demon to train the body, tiger demon to train the bones, follow the demons to enter the dao. As they say, “as the daoist rises one foot, the demon rises ten.” The might is a lot stronger.”

“I have a human body, if I cultivate this technique will I suffer any side effect?”

“No idea, because no human tried, maybe you could really deviate from the right way and transform into a monster.”

The bull green said it with ease. Li Qingshan only smiled wryly. It would be one thing to cultivate a technique passed on from ancient times, he would become at most a “strange person” and be mocked by other cultivators. Cultivating a technique that’d gone through revision at the hands of monsters and demons, he could become a “freak” and maybe get killed in the name of great justice.

But now wasn’t a time when he could pick meat from the fat. Li Qingshan considered carefully for a while and took a deep breath: “Then please elder brother bull teach me this supernatural skill.” If someone could understand his hunger to change his fate at this moment, they’d realize that he’d accept the assistance from even the devil.

The green bull explained to him in details the essence of this [Bull Demon Strong Fist]. Li Qingshan immediately practiced, starting to imitate one move and one form at a time, exercising his muscles and bones, operating his four limbs.

Under the dazzling sunlight, there were an old bull and a young man between the dancing shades of the trees. The old bull reclined leisurely and gave instructions while the young man listened respectfully with rapt attention.

Although the green bull couldn't demonstrate himself, he hit the nail on the head each time he spoke, making Li Qingshan suddenly see the light, increasing his understanding of the [Bull Demon Strong Fist], and making him even more motivated to train.

The green bull spoke carelessly, but in his heart he was also satisfied by the comprehension of this "disciple." Worthy of someone with inborn wisdom, this kind of people would certainly not live long among wild grasses. Unfortunately he was born in this village deep in the mountains. His fate was really unfavorable, like a dragon in shallow waters and a tiger fallen from the mountain to the plains.

Otherwise in any flourishing city, whether learning martial arts or scholarly arts, he would have long ago risen above others and become an elite, and he wouldn't have to suffer anger from some stupid villagers.

But it was only thanks to this that this excellent material could fall into its hooves. What it wanted to teach was more than a mere elite.

Chapter 6: Settling Grudge And Gratitude

How many so-called geniuses with astonishing talents had the green bull seen? One and all endowed with rare gifts and luck like that of a god, but those who attained any real achievement were only a few. On the contrary, many who were originally obscure and unknown nobodies became in one go renowned under the heavens and walked to the highest peaks on this road of cultivation.

These years, he had deliberately observed with cool eyes on the sidelines no matter what hardship tempered Li Qingshan, and had only spoken at a critical moment. Like a master craftsman, he slowly polished the material in his hands, casting an exceptional divine weapon.

What ordinary people cared about were natural endowments and destiny, those external things, but what it regarded as important was a man's resolve. If you don't have a strong will, then even if I gave you an opportunity vast as the sky, would you be able to shoulder it?

Thus, one was willing to teach, and one was willing to learn, then naturally the speed of progress was divine. In less than two hours of effort, Li Qingshan had a broad understanding about the [Bull Demon Strong Fist], faintly grasping the outline within.

Although the [Bull Demon Strong Fist] was a fist scripture, it focused on training tendons, bones, skin and muscles, on strengthening the body, while the fist techniques were instead secondary. There were only three styles in total, separated as "Bull

Demon's Horn Gore," "Bull Demon's Hoof Stamp," "Demon Bull Skin Shift," all the most basic of styles among fist techniques, but they could reach the complex from the simple, giving rise to countless transformations.

Of course, to grasp was one thing, to practice was another thing. To obtain achievements, one couldn't skimp on the polishing through days and months. Li Qingshan had already experienced the two most basic things need to train in this supernatural skill. They were precisely wine and meat.

Whether supernatural skills or dao techniques, they still couldn't create something out of nothing, transform for no reason an ordinary man into possessing the strength of ox. Even if the technique's power overflowed the heavens, it still couldn't avoid the process of gathering and transformation, of massing the essence of the sun and moon, breathing in the spiritual qi of heaven and earth. When the dao reached to the farther depths, you could eat the wind and drink the dew, abstain from eating grains, and use the spiritual qi of heaven and earth to replace mortal food.

Li Qingshan only had a mortal body, where would he find the ability to communicate with the spiritual qi of heaven and earth. He also couldn't find immortal pills and spiritual medicine, so he had to start with those most ordinary things, constantly replenishing and transforming qi essence.

Li Qingshan's body still wasn't tough enough even though he ate meat for a few days. He could barely practice those three styles once, his sweat dripping like rain while he panted and puffed, his belly wildly growling.

Enduring to noon, he seemed to have been starving for three days, and ate the rest of his wild boar meat in one breath without a morsel left. Unexpectedly he ate even more than the first time.

He couldn't lie down and rest in the afternoon either, but had to meditate and nourish his qi and experience the feeling of qi circulating through his body. When his body recovered more or less, he practiced another set of fist techniques, then repeated the same cycle several times, until nightfall. Li Qingshan was already utterly drained and he didn't even want to move a single finger.

Three silhouettes sneakily groped their way to the front of Li Qingshan's thatched house. Li Qingshan heard the sound of their movements and walked out of the house. He saw it was the three scoundrels who used to mix up with Baldy Liu. He feared they were there to avenge their big brother, and he couldn't help crying bitterness in his heart. At this moment he was bone-weary, how could he be their opponent? Even in normal conditions he couldn't fight alone against three men.

But he couldn't imagine that when the three scoundrels saw him, they were like mice that saw a cat. They bowed their heads and paid their respect, shouting: "Spare our lives."

Li Qingshan froze a moment and asked: "Why did you come here?"

How could he know that when the three scoundrels saw Baldy Liu's dead corpse, they were scared until their guts split open.

They were afraid Li Qingshan wouldn't let matters rest after killing Baldy Liu and would come find trouble for them this night, so they braced themselves and came to his door to explain, only saying that they were also under orders. Every sin rested on Baldy Liu, and the one behind his back, Steward Liu.

Li Qingshan said: "You don't need to say anything, I'm already aware of these matters." That night he'd heard clearly, but of course he couldn't answer that he was the one who killed Baldy Liu.

The three scoundrels trembled in their heart. Remembering that this fiend was just outside the window that night, they became even more frightened.

Li Qingshan vaguely understood why those three people were so afraid. He remembered that in his previous world, something like a murderer on the run happened to the small city he lived in. All kinds of rumors had flown and filled the sky, frightening people to the point no one dared step outside at night. Now he'd put on such a layer of a murderer's aura.

Wicked people were also separated in different levels. The three scoundrels were only chicken stealing "small wicked wretches," and facing his kind of "great sinister fiend" they could only bow their heads and be obedient. His face didn't show any change but he felt some weirdness inside. He didn't even manage to successfully practice any kind of supernatural skill, and only with a little change in his state of mind, his status in the village already went through an earthshaking change.

Those changes were all caused by the green bull, maybe this also counted as turning the rotten into something magical!

Li Qingshan didn't pay them heed, and exerted himself to practice the [Bull Demon Strong Fist] one more time. This time there were three people present and he trained with special diligence. He knew that the present him was merely false bravado, and the results would be too terrible to imagine if people found out he'd already used up all his meager abilities.

The three scoundrel cautiously looked on the sideline. They'd been in the village so many years and had never heard that Li Qingshan understood fist techniques. In the darkness Li Qingshan's moves were awe-inspiring and full of strength. He obviously wasn't trying to fool them. They couldn't help think back to what the witch said, it could really be that Li Qingshan was possessed by some monster demon.

The color of the sky was becoming darker. They became scared until their legs and belly cramped up. They wanted to leave but couldn't open their mouth either, afraid Li Qingshan would suddenly reveal his original demon body and devour them in one bite.

When Li Qingshan finished his exercise, he ordered: "Follow me." He walked outside the door on his own, not caring about them anymore. The three scoundrels glanced at each other and could only follow behind.

By this time, many villagers were eating in front of their door. Those familiar with Li Qingshan cautiously greeted him, those

unfamiliar hurried to hide back inside their house. Even if during the day they'd protected Li Qingshan out of moral indignation, there was no one who didn't feel some fear coming face to face with this murderer.

The three scoundrels usually followed Baldy Liu and fooled around. Baldy Liu still had some face in the village depending on his viciousness, but they were loathed by people and disliked by dogs. How could they have this kind of prestige? They immediately forgot their fear and started to feel proud instead. If they could follow Second Son Li, it would be a lot more lofty and stylish than in the past.

Some elderly people sighed. Although the evil wretch Baldy Liu was punished, they were afraid it gave birth to a bigger scourge. At least Baldy Liu never took a man's life with his hands, and people weren't all that much afraid of him.

Li Qingshan also had a kind of intimately novel sensation as he walked on this road he'd walked countless times before. He clearly recognized that he already wasn't the Li Qingshan from the past anymore. He directly came in front of a thatched house, and was immediately filled with a thousand emotions when he remembered that he was still moping here not so long ago.

Inside the door Big Couple Li pressed against the door trembling in fright. Big Brother Li held a stick in his hand while Big Wife Li held a kitchen knife. Something that the scoundrels feared, how could they not fear either? But they weren't the same as the scoundrels, they had the silver from selling the land in their hands, and if they gave in to Li Qingshan they couldn't hold onto that

money anymore.

So today they didn't even do any farm work and stayed at home, discussing for the whole day. Finally it was Big Brother Li who made the decision: "He's only one person, do we still have to fear him? If he dares to come, I'll get rid of this evil creature on behalf of the Li clan." But only a little time after he said those hard words, he saw Li Qingshan come find them with three persons in tow, and was suddenly scared into hiding inside the house.

Li Qingshan said: "Drag them all out."

The three scoundrels were intimidated by his prestige and didn't dare refuse. They had a lot of experience bullying this kind of common people after all, and with a shout they broke into the door. Big Couple Li immediately disarmed and surrendered, not daring to put up any resistance. They were terrified until their face was the color of dirt, trembling nonstop.

"Second brother, second brother, what's this you're doing?" Big Brother Li squeezed out a smile that was even uglier than crying.

Li Qingshan said: "I'm not looking for you." He said to Big Wife Li: "Thieving wench, it doesn't matter if you usually insult me, but yesterday you insulted my parents. Today I definitely won't spare you."

Big Wife Li was scared until her legs became soft when he stared at her, not having her usual arrogant appearance anymore: "Little Second, that was me talking without thinking. I took care of you

for a dozen years, we're all family."

Li Qingshan smiled coldly: "All a family? It wouldn't have mattered if you didn't mention it, but now that you did I still got accounts to settle. First let's talk about those stinky words from yesterday, what should we do?"

A small and thin scoundrel that looked like a monkey fawned and said: "How does this need big brother to act, junior brother knows the rules." So saying he rolled up his sleeves and slapped toward Big Wife Li's face.

Li Qingshan caught the scoundrel's hand. Yesterday in the ancestral hall he would have liked nothing better than doing this, but today looking at their trembling appearance he somewhat couldn't bear to. He remembered that those two were still his brother and sister-in-law no matter what, how could he let them suffer such humiliation at the hand of a hoodlum?

But he couldn't let this pass. Something flashed in his mind and he said to Big Brother Li: "Don't tell me those she insulted weren't your own father and mother? Don't you know how to discipline her?"

Big Brother Li realized the truth: "Right right right!" As if he was nervous Li Qingshan wouldn't be satisfied, he put in strength and violently slapped Big Wife Li's face several times. Big Wife Li's face immediately became swollen.

Li Qingshan felt that this big brother of his looked very satisfied

as he hit his wife. He wondered if he wasn't using this occasion to take revenge. Anyway his own anger dissipated more than half, and he asked: "You said we're all a family. Let me ask you, where's the money from selling the land?"

Big Wife Li's face that had been hit swollen red became pale white at once. Big Brother Li also closed up tight and didn't utter a word. This money was their flesh and blood, Li Qingshan was trying to cut off their flesh this time! Compared to this money, they'd rather get beaten instead.

Big Wife Li suddenly became unreasonable: "Kill me then, kill your own sister-in-law, let's see if there's no official coming to arrest you, I don't know what money you're talking about, if you want it you can go ask for it to Steward Liu!"

Li Qingshan said sternly: "You really think I won't dare?" This was already not a bluff. The murderous aura from killing Baldy Liu the previous night seemed to borrow the night's darkness to come back around him. That young man in the stream's reflection, with his body covered in blood and his two eyes staring round, had already merged with him into one.

The three scoundrels on the sideline felt their body go cold and couldn't resist taking a step back, looking terrified at Li Qingshan.

The Big Couple Li who took the blunt of it were even more scared stiff. When did they see such a terrifying person in their whole life? It was hard to imagine this was the same Li the Second who had lived together with them for more than a dozen years.

In the end, a bag of silver was paid into Li Qingshan's hand. Li Qingshan weighed it. Looking at the colorless faces of Big Couple Li, he sighed in his heart. Just for the sake of this little silver, they had to coerce their own brother to such a degree. He turned around and walked away, the three scoundrels scurrying after him.

Right when Big Couple Li was ready to hold their heads and cry in anguish, the silver bag drew a curve and landed in front of them with a "pa."

Li Qingshan's words came from very far away: "Although you treated me as a servant, throwing insults and contempt at me, it's also thanks to you that I could survive to this day. From today on, gratitude and grudge are settled, there's no more relationship between us."

Chapter 7: Pledging A Great Wish

Silver was lost and recovered. Big Couple Li exposed expressions of pleasant surprise and big Wife Li didn't even care about her face's pain anymore, hurriedly hugging the bag of silver in her arms.

The three scoundrels were all left speechless, admiration exposed on their faces. This wasn't a small amount of silver, it was enough to freely spend for a while, but he actually threw it so easily on the ground. Originally they only felt fear, but now watching Li Qingshan's back, they faintly felt much more respect for him.

They actually believed that those good men who made clear distinction between grudge and gratitude were only random nonsense cooked up by storytellers, but they didn't think they would see one with their own eyes. If he could be like this at such a young age, he would certainly be a character of note in the future. The contempt they felt because of Li Qingshan's age was now also completely eliminated.

Li Qingshan walked in great strides in front of them. As the day fell below the western mountains and the green hills quieted, he felt incomparably calm and relaxed, as if he'd been unloaded from an invisible burden. New vigor came to his body out of nowhere and even his fatigue entirely vanished. He faintly felt that if he were to practice the [Bull Demon Strong Fist] right now, it would be much smoother than earlier during the day.

This wasn't an illusion of his. Whether daoist supernatural skills or mortal martial arts, they all paid attention to the suitability of

the practitioner's mood. The [Bull Demon Strong Fist] was originally an unrestrained technique requiring a clear mind and the courage to forge ahead.

Li Qingshan forthrightly threw his resentment away and there was no more gloom in his heart, hence it naturally suited the quintessence within.

Li Qingshan's vision fell brightly on the three scoundrels when they went back to the thatched house: "I have to offer you many thanks for just now." Without the pressure of those three, those brother and sister-in-law of his would certainly not have caved in so easily. If they started playing rough with their sticks and knives, he truly had no real way, and maybe he would even have suffered.

His mind was moved. He didn't think that he could handle this matter so smoothly and now understood the advantages of numbers. Even the [bull demon king](#) also needed six sworn brothers, to say nothing about him! Of course, those three scoundrels weren't worthy of being his brothers.

The demon bull king is a character that appears in Journey to the West.

The three hurriedly said: "What is big brother talking about? We already can't thank you enough for being a great man with a broad mind and not bicker with us over small matters. Baldy Liu didn't know good from evil and even death can't wipe his crimes away, we followed him and greatly offended in the past..."

Li Qingshan interrupted with a wave of the hand: "The past is in

the past.”

The three scoundrels all felt relaxed when they obtained this promise. They started to get other ideas and fawned around him one and all, becoming excited and emotional as they spoke, almost as if they were about to burn a few blades of grass as incense and become his sworn brothers.

Even in his past life Li Qingshan had never been praised and flattered this much. Although it came from the mouths of three rascals he looked down upon, it was still difficult to avoid the pride and hilarity in his heart. But becoming sworn brothers was impossible, so he said a few random things and sent the three away.

The green bull crouching at the side said: “Why didn’t you promise them? They were willing to gang up and to make you their leader, you’d have been safer in the village, and you would also have had people inform you about any news.”

What the villagers struggled about was precisely manpower. Often times a family with many brothers and many sons wouldn’t be easily bullied, they might even go bully others.

Li Qingshan proudly said: “The people this Li Qingshan wants to associate with, even if they aren’t heroes unmatched under the sky, still must be men with bones of iron who value feelings and righteousness. How could I wallow in the mire together with these three.” His voice was awe-inspiring, and a few crows flew up in surprise, roaming among the treetops.

The green bull became quiet and didn't speak anymore. It sank into deep contemplation as it looked at Li Qingshan's high-spirited and heroic appearance.

Li Qingshan felt a little embarrassed and rubbed the back of his head: "Brother bull, you must be laughing at me for saying big words, but it's just what I'm thinking. You're the only one I can tell these things to."

Once again the green bull took out a wine gourd out of nowhere and threw it to Li Qingshan: "It's better to go back and plow the land if you don't even dare to say a few words. What other big words do you have, say them all out and let me listen."

Li Qingshan pulled the cork with practiced ease. He lifted his head and gulp gulp drank a few mouthfuls of wine, casually wiping his mouth, his smiling showing his teeth: "I want to wander everywhere in those [five lakes and four seas, through the nine provinces under the heavens](#), taste every fine delicacies on this world, drink every fine liquor under the sky, cultivate the fiercest divine skills, battle the strongest enemies, bed the most beautiful women. Only this could be considered not a waste of this life! Brother bull, do you think I can realize this dream?"

The five lakes and four seas, the nine provinces, those are ancient Chinese ways of calling the (civilized) world.

"You certainly can!"

"Very well, I hope your words come true!"

The great dreams of the young man echoed in this small courtyard. Perhaps at this very moment, even he himself didn't take them seriously, but a spark had already fallen into his innermost being, about to light up a burning prairie.

Li Qingshan took advantage of his heart of wine and practiced the three styles of the [Bull Demon Strong Fist] another time. Half-drunk and half-lucid, he also had no idea whether his moves were correct or not. He was just waving his fist and kicking his feet as his heart wished, while the green bull merely drank wine at the side and didn't say anything.

Li Qingshan fell drunk on the ground.

The next day, the matter about Li Qingshan returning the money to his brother and sister-in-law very quickly spread around the whole village through the mouths of the three scoundrels. Concerning his choice, some people were full of admiration and praised his extraordinary mettle. Some people also laughed mockingly, what are you going to eat without the land? Aren't you still going to be a hired worker for Steward Liu, let's see what kind of mettle you'll have by then.

But they still didn't really dare say it brazenly in the open. The Second Son Li's prestige in the Crouching Bull Village was already faintly rising.

Steward Liu was half and half happy and worried about this thing. Happy naturally that Li the Second wouldn't come haggling

over this piece of land, but worried that Li the Second distinguished grudges and gratitude so clearly. Maybe right now he was merely containing his hatred and was waiting for an opportunity to take revenge. After all that Baldy Liu was acting under his orders back then.

It would actually be better if Li the Second came charging in now. He had a thousand ways to deal with him. But you couldn't ask him to be on his guard day after day, night after night. It was indeed "rather bully the old than a poor young man."

While Steward Liu was thinking in the hall, a crooked old man supported by a young man came to his door. He was stopped by the gatekeeping servants.

Steward Liu immediately went out and greeted them, his fat face smiling: "Great Village Chief Li, which wind blew you this way?"

Village Chief Li said with a stern face: "I don't know when you put a guard here, what are you guarding against?"

Steward Liu smiled, a little embarrassed. Although he was a landowner, it was merely a small mountain village after all, and his gate couldn't be as rich as the great wealthy city families. It only had an old concierge, what gatekeeper was there usually?

Although he exhausted all means to take over the village's lands, most of it was still from honest business, and even if he bullied he bullied negligible people, so he didn't have many personal enemies. Now the one he guarded against was naturally Li

Qingshan. In his eyes, this kid also used to be someone negligible, but lately his reactions really surpassed his expectations.

The two men went inside the house to chat. Village chief Li didn't beat around the bush and said: "Steward Liu, you're someone who's seen the world. Tell me, how should we tidy up this Li the Second?"

His eyes were fully bloodshot. The villagers were afraid of Li Qingshan, and likewise he was also afraid. The older they became the more people feared death. Last night he had lain on the bed tossing and turning, find it difficult to sleep. He had hurriedly sat up anytime there was some motion, afraid it was Li Qingshan secretly coming in to take this old life of his. He almost couldn't fall asleep the whole night.

He'd gotten up at the very dawn, making a firm resolution. If he couldn't get rid of this anxiety, he had no way to live anymore, so he came to Steward Liu.

Steward Liu spread his hands and said: "How to tidy him up, the villagers all respect him as a hero, and besides there's no evidence it was him who killed Baldy Liu."

"How isn't he the one who killed him, it was almost written on his face." Said the young man beside Village Chief Li. He was Village Chief Li's son Tiger Li. He was also a tyrant in the village, and nowadays Li Qingshan had stolen a lot of his thunder so he felt very unhappy.

“Even if it’s written on his face you still couldn’t read.” Steward Liu glared at him. Even an ignorant kid like you dares to act wild in front of me? He looked at Village Chief Li and spoke in a slow tone: “Do you know what he did last night?”

“Of course I know, everyone thinks he’s a hero, this way I’m even more unable of commanding them, that’s why I came to find you.”

As the one with the greatest power in the village, Village Chief was already used to have things the way he ordered, but suddenly a kid jumped out and offended his dignity, so he also felt very angry and very hurt. He resolved he absolutely had to retrieve this face. He gave no thought as to who actually was the first one to overturn right and wrong, reverse black and white.

Chapter 8: Attending A Deadly Banquet

Steward Liu said: “He still has to eat.”

Tiger Li said: “Who doesn’t have to eat?”

As they say, people become shrewder when they become old. Village Chief Li wasn’t silly yet and his eyes brightened: “You’re saying?”

“If he wants to eat he has to work. Who can still afford to hire him in this village? If he works under me, won’t he be at our mercy?”

Steward Liu looked at the admiring expression on Village Chief Li’s face and his son’s and felt a burst of pride. Food was the common people’s god, but it didn’t fall from the sky and grew from the land instead. To control the land was the same as grasping the people’s lifeblood. If he couldn’t eat for three days, even a hero would become a chicken.

Steward Liu had already planned his countermeasures. I don’t need to be ruthless and eradicate him, just beat him and see his attitude. It won’t be too bad if he can be useful to me.

Li Qingshan had no idea about those schemes and calculations when he woke up from his dreams. He only saw a musk deer lying in his courtyard. He laughed a “hehe” and without even thanking the green bull he skinned the deer and cut the meat. This time he’d already prepared salt and he could pickle the meat, so it wouldn’t

decay if he couldn't eat it all.

Done with those preparations, he went besides the brook and briefly washed himself, then started the day's training.

During those several days of efforts, he always got up from bed before daylight and only went to sleep when the sky was entirely black. He almost didn't put one step outside of his house, completely cutting off contact with the outside world. He trained every day until exhaustion, but he didn't feel it difficult or boring.

He was striving hard toward his own dreams. With every step forward, every little bit of progress, it was as if a brand new world was opening in front of him.

After more than ten days, at the same moment when Li Qingshan had just finished the last of the deer meat, Village Chief was already on the verge of breaking. These days he didn't have a single peaceful sleep, and had to make his two sons stand guard besides his bed every night to barely sleep a little. At such an advanced age, how could he endure this way? He looked like he was going to suffer a serious illness at any moment, and he hurriedly went to consult with Steward Liu.

Steward Liu was also anxious with this wait. Everyday he sent servants to observe outside Li Qingshan's house. The first servant came back and said that right now Li Qingshan was eating meat and drinking wine day in and day out, and he was even practicing martial arts. He still didn't believe at first, but after several servants came back and all said the same things, no one dared to go observe anymore.

The demon possession the witch talked about floated in their minds. Li Qingshan's courtyard was majestically shrouded in a mysterious and frightful atmosphere. Moreover Li Qingshan diligently practiced martial arts, and in some people's opinion it was precisely in preparation for revenge.

Watching Village Chief Li who seemed almost ready to cry, Steward Liu frowned and made a decision: "Invite him to attend a banquet. If he dares to come then he's a hero, if he doesn't dare then he's a wimp who's putting up airs."

An invitation card was delivered to Li Qingshan's hand. He fiddled around with the crimson invitation. In this small village, whether weddings or funerals, most of the time people came to invite you orally. This kind of formal invite was extremely rare, and he couldn't help but feel a sense of novelty.

He pondered a while. This was like a Red Wedding, and if he went he could well be walking head-first into a trap. He'd only practiced his technique for a dozen days, and although he obtained quite a lot of results, you still couldn't ask him to fight a crowd with only his two fists.

But if he didn't go, the prestige he'd established with much pains would be thrown to the waters. When people mentioned him they would certainly say he didn't even dare to go to a banquet, and his reputation would be ruined.

The blows would come incessantly if he showed any weakness at

this time. This hand of Steward Liu's contained very deep calculations, forcing him between a rock and a hard place.

The green bull said: "Are you going?"

"It just happens I don't have anything to eat anymore, why wouldn't I go if someone invites me? [Guan Yunchang went to the meeting with nothing but his blade](#), don't tell me I have to be afraid of eating a village meal." Li Qingshan laughed loudly, a heroic spirit emerging in his chest.

Guan Yunchang is Guan Yu, a famous character of the Three Kingdoms era and a general under Liu Bei. This particular meeting was between him and Lu Su, a vassal of Sun Quan, to settle a territorial dispute between Liu Bei and Sun Quan over the Jing province. I believe it is the Book of Wu that mentions that Lu Su came with hundreds of soldiers, while Guan Yu went with nothing but his blade.

"Who's Gun Yunchang?"

"A hero I heard about." Li Qingshan stood up, put strength in his two arms and demonstrated the Bull Demon Horn Gore. At once he breathed loudly and spit out his breath. Sounds of moos faintly came from inside his lungs, like a big buffalo waving its two horns and ready to fight.

The green bull nodded with satisfaction. Li Qingshan's [Bull Demon Strong Fist] was already touching the door of the dao. The progress was really amazingly fast. It wouldn't be beneficial to his cultivation if he were to go into hiding now because of this small

danger.

“By chance I still have grudges with some people that I haven’t been able to cleanly settle yet. It’s not a pleasant feeling in my chest, now’s just the right opportunity.” Since the day he cut off grievances and grudges with Big Couple Li, Li Qingshan’s [Bull Demon Strong Fist] had indeed made a lot of progress, proving that his conjecture wasn’t just an illusion.

The summer was about to pass but the sun was still as bright as before. Inside Steward Liu’s great courtyard, under the shades of several elm trees, the banquet tables had already been arranged in place.

A group of burly men filled several square tables and swallowed their saliva as they looked at the dishes and wines on the tables. There was only Steward Liu’s home that could afford this kind of feast! But with the craftiness of farmers, they also knew they weren’t gratuitously invited to this feast, and Steward Liu had already explained many things to them.

He said... said that he’d hurl his cup in what signal? Anyway they didn’t really understand, they only knew that once Steward Liu showed hostility they had to wave their fists.

They weren’t too keen on becoming enemy with Li Qingshan, but they were all hired workers on Steward Liu’s farms and they didn’t dare offend this person who their livelihood depended on. Anyway that Li the Second was only fifteen years old, how could he fight against so many people? So every worker who could come already came and filled several tables to the brim.

Even if they somewhat couldn't bear, they could only use a lighter hand and just pretend, let the Second son kneel and apologize to Steward Liu so he could suffer a little less hardships.

Cicadas lazily screeched overhead, and everyone was a little impatient. It wasn't a little ordeal for them to see good food and good wine but not being able to taste them. The sound of their conversation drowned the cicadas:

"It's about time, he's scared and didn't dare to come, let's hurry to eat!"

"So in his place you wouldn't be afraid? Not coming is the right choice, only a dumbass would come."

Steward Liu only smiled faintly as if he didn't hear, thinking: it's best if he knows fear, it's only a little kid after all .

"He's coming he's coming!" A young worker trotted into the yard with a face full of sweat: "Li the Second came!"

The people in the yard looked like their necks were being strangled all at the same time. No one made a sound. The cries of cicadas suddenly become louder and clearer.

Li Qingshang stood in front of the Liu house's gate, his heart likewise fiercely anxious. Things were always easy to say and harder to do. This great Liu house's courtyard with green bricks

and white walls in front of him was just like a small dragon pond or tiger cave. If he were a little careless he could well throw his life away inside.

The idea of turning tails came to him as he remembered that “revenge was a dish best served cold.” With the current speed of his progress, he just needed time, a year, no, half a year, even three months. He could whip his [Bull Demon Strong Fist] into shape, then he wouldn’t need to fear anyone inside the yard anymore.

His spirit suddenly shook, and he asked his own conscience: “Li Qingshan, Li Qingshan, don’t tell me the words you said back then were only farts? In this life you only dare to bare your fangs to people weaker than you? In that case even if you cultivated unrivaled divine powers, you would still merely be nothing more than a coward to your very bones.”

These various shifting moods and thoughts actually only took a few moments. Li Qingshan deeply breathed in, clenched his fists, his expression becoming firm and unwavering as he crossed inside the gate without any hesitation.

Chapter 9: Once A Coarse Person Rages

The gate closed behind him. Li Qingshan looked around, seemingly not noticing the tense atmosphere inside the yard at all, and headed toward the table Steward Liu sat at. That place faced the hall and was arranged under the tallest old elm tree in the yard. It was where the main seats were, and those sitting there were all people with fame and prestige within the village.

On the right and left of Steward Liu were Village Chief Li and the witch. Those were precisely the three peoples with the greatest power and influence in the Crouching Bull Village. There were also some village elders, and the only young people were Village Chief Li's two sons, Tiger Li and Panther Li. They were both born tall and burly, and glared at Li Qingshan like beasts watching their preys.

Steward Liu's eyes slightly contracted. It'd only been a dozen days since he last saw him, but Li Qingshan seemed like he had become another person. He couldn't say concretely what changed, but anyway it was greatly different compared to the past. There was a momentum that wasn't there before.

Village Chief Li had an august expression, and a bad light in his eyes. The witch was straight out naked poison.

If ordinary villagers offended any of those three, they couldn't even live in the village anymore. They could only bow their heads and apologize. Not to mention offending the three of them together, but Li Qingshan would certainly not apologize or bow his head down.

There were actually many rules in the village for eating at a feast, from the position of your seat to the sitting posture, all were pretty complex. Li Qingshan noticed that the other tables were all squeezed full, and only this table was comparatively less crowded. He boldly sat down, saying: “Why aren’t you eating yet, is everyone waiting for me?”

No one answered him. Tiger Li and Panther Li pressed closer on both sides and separately gripped his two shoulders, squeezing down forcefully.

Although Li Qingshan was young, his stature was tall and wasn’t inferior to the two of them, but his build was slim and far from their beefy physique. If it were in the past, only one of them would have been enough to subdue Li Qingshan. Even now Li Qingshan could only cope with one, two was hard to say.

Li Qingshan frowned. He grabbed the two’s wrists and pulled down, resorting at the same time to the “Bull Demon Skin Shift” transformation, looking like a buffalo stretching its muscles and bones as he leaned left and right.

Panther Lid and Tiger Li only felt a burst of pain from their wrists. Li Qingshan bumped again into them and they suddenly couldn’t control their bodies, falling down from their chairs.

The two felt humiliated and flew into a rage. They sprang up without caring about the dust and dirt covering their bodies.

Steward Liu originally planned on saying a few words for the scene and probe Li Qingshan's intentions, see if he had any thoughts about giving in. But unexpectedly Tiger Li and Panther Li acted so impulsively. He didn't have time to curse them as he was about to throw the cup in his hand and order his workers to act.

“Clang!” A short knife nailed into the surface of the table, and the movements of the other people were also nailed stiff. The blade radiated a hazy glint under the mottled sunlight.

Tiger Li and Panther Li suddenly didn't dare to go forward anymore. They were both sons of the village chief and were pampered. They could still bully honest people with their robust bodies, but they weren't ready to struggled to the death with someone.

Li Qingshan held the short knife with one hand, stamped one foot on the bench, bent his body forward and looked at Steward Liu as he smiled taciturnly: “Steward Liu, that's no way to treat your guests. Even if you have life and death grudges to settle, there's still no harm in waiting until we eat and drink our fill before talking about it. Don't waste these tables full of food and wine.” He didn't feel anxiety anymore as he said this.

Before Steward Liu opened his mouth, the workers around the tables actually applauded one after another. What was the most important thing for them, of course it was to eat! If they started to fight they didn't know how much food they'd spill and knock down. They would absolute not believe the stingy Steward Liu would prepare another table for them.

“Right right, steward Liu, we didn’t even eat this morning? We’re so hungry our back is touching our chest, where would we have any strength to fight.”

“I didn’t even eat last night, I’m going to die if I don’t have a bite now.” The one saying this harshly swallowed a mouthful of saliva.

The hostile atmosphere at daggers drawn suddenly became weird. Even Li Qingshan didn’t know whether to cry or laugh, silently wondering why he had been so afraid of this group of people.

Steward Liu’s face swelled bright red. The reason he set up this feast was one to subdue Li Qingshan, and two to give his hired hands some benefits, because he was worried they wouldn’t work hard enough.

He wholeheartedly wanted to imitate the books, hide five hundred axemen, and have them rush out [at the signal at a thrown cup](#) to arrest Li Qingshan. But he had forgotten that the people under him weren’t a death squad or some retired generals, but a group of genuine farmers.

The plot to invite someone to a banquet then throw a cup as signal for the hidden soldiers is often used in Chinese fiction. I’m not sure if the five hundred soldiers in this case is a reference to anything specific, sorry.

Liu Qingshan smiled happily at Steward Liu: “What a coincidence, I also didn’t eat anything last night, now I’ll have to be impolite.” He grabbed a roasted chicken and started to eat.

Since he began cultivating the [Bull Demon Strong Fist], his food consumption became very astonishing. A hundred pounds of deer meat unexpectedly only lasted him a dozen days before he finished it clean. The green bull didn't have time yet to catch new prey.

A roast chicken disappeared in a flash inside his mouth. He stretched his head and looked around. The workers didn't care anymore, and they lifted their chopsticks one after another, engrossing themselves in the food. In a moment there was only the loud sounds of eating and gnawing in the yard.

Village Chief Li was angry and afraid at the same time. His whole body trembled and he stared at Steward Liu. Aren't you very smart, quickly think of something.

What something could Steward Liu think of? He stared back. If I told the workers to act, and they don't want to abandon the food, what am I going to do when Li Qingshan rushes first on me and give me the knife? Your two sons usually look so tough, why did they become so soft at this time?

At this table, just relying on Steward Liu and the group of old people, all of them added up weren't even enough for a kick from Li Qingshan. It seemed like they had suddenly been cast off on a desert island and they had to face this vicious Li Qingshan alone. They were all trembling in their hearts and scared witless.

Once a coarse person rages, blood splashes five feet away.

Li Qingshan acted as if there was no one else beside him. He lifted a wine gourd, poured it himself and nursed the cup by himself. This village wine was already weak and drinking it like this was simply tasteless, so he shouted: "Give me a big bowl!"

But no one answered him. Li Qingshan made an annoyed "hmm?" sound, then Steward Liu hurriedly ordered someone to get a big bowl. Li Qingshan filled the bowl, lifted his head and drank it clean in one mouthful: "Delightful!"

The workers saw him drink so refreshingly and again admired his courage. Quite a few cries of "good!" even came from them.

Li Qingshan had eaten a lot of greasy food these days, and he felt incomparably refreshed when this hot spicy drink washed down. He didn't stop in the least and drank three bowls in succession.

When the third bowl went into his belly, the yard was already rumbling with praising shouts, the noise like the gurgle of boiling water. It was like the workers didn't come because Steward Liu invited them, but to lend their fists to assist Li Qingshan.

Li Qingshan let out a drunken belch and cupped his hands to all four directions in salutation: "Everyone eat their fill and drink their fill, don't forget Steward Liu's generosity. What grudge and quarrels can be settled after the meal. Anyway even if you have to walk on the road to the netherworld, you still can't be a hungry ghost."

After that his eyebrows straightened and he looked at the people

at the main table: “Why aren’t you eating?” His killing intent rushed up with the rush of alcohol. If these people kept making trouble for him, then this Crouching Bull village wouldn’t be safe, and maybe one day he’d fall to a sinister plot of theirs. He might as well kill some of them, snatch some properties and go somewhere else. He expected none of those villagers would dare stop him.

At first Li Qingshan merely came to risk the banquet, and there was even some false bravado in that, but as a result he saw the false bravado of Steward Liu and the rest instead. In a short moment, the guest became the host, he went from passive to active and his thoughts also became greatly different. He couldn’t help remembering the words of uncle [Lei Feng](#): Trouble is like a spring, if you’re weak it becomes strong. Then he also remembered the great ancestor Mao’s words: imperialists are all paper tigers, hmm, land owners are also paper tigers.

Lei Feng was a soldier who became famous in Chinese culture after his death thanks to a propaganda campaign launched by the communist party. They advertised him as a model citizen, selfless and modest, and devoted to Mao and the party.

Although Steward Liu’s scheme was a little botched, he was still experienced in reading people. Looking at Li Qingshan’s expression, he realized with one glance that he was thinking about murder. He couldn’t keep the facade of sophistication anymore and a layer of cold sweat drenched his forehead.

The several village elders were even more scared, they didn’t want to become well-fed ghosts either! They hurriedly explained to Li Qingshan that at the family separation ceremony they were also coping with the situation, and were absolutely not in the know. Some people stood up trembling, wanting to take their leaves.

Li Qingshan coldly shouted: “Everyone be still. Everyone’s seen the things that happened in the past few days with their own eyes. Don’t be in a hurry to leave, eat your fill and drink to your content, stay afterwards and be my witness. You must have a guilty conscience if you still insist on not listening, in that case you can’t blame a certain knife’s ruthless.”

Chapter 10: No Gods Above

The old folks sat back falteringly on their chair. Li Qingshan buried his head in the dishes, eating and drinking in great mouthfuls. These days he only ate deer meat and it became annoying. It just happened that he wanted a change of taste, and he swept clean the table brimming with dishes by himself, rubbing his swelling belly.

“Normally the people in this yard are all my elder generations, it’s not an exaggeration to say you saw me grow up. But there are some people who don’t care about this affection and pushed me around for a little land. If today you don’t give me an explanation, then I’ll give you an explanation. Even if I lose my life today I won’t have any regret.”

Li Qingshan pulled his knife out as he said: “Steward Liu, Village Chief Li, don’t you agree?”

Steward Liu was determined not to eat this bitterness in front of his eyes, and said in defeat: “Second son, this land, if you want to grow it you can just take it back!”

Li Qingshan said: “I don’t need this little piece of land. You spent money to buy it, I’m not going to take unfair advantage. I just want to obtain justice. You people do whatever you please in the village, but don’t forget there are gods above. Justice is in the heart of men.” His voice became more stern as he spoke on.

Steward Liu was embarrassed and couldn’t say anything, while

Village Chief Li answered: “We were wrong in this matter, we believed your brother...”

“That’s not my brother.” Li Qingshan coldly interrupted.

“Li the Eldest babbled nonsense, they were blinded by lard and money, that’s why they could do such a silly thing. These day I couldn’t sleep, I was afraid I’d die someday and wouldn’t have any face in front of your father and mother.” Village Chief Li spoke through moist eyes as he went on, his old tears flowing unrestrained. He was really remembering the suffering he’d gone through these past days.

Li Qingshan said to the other elder people: “Then according to you, should that piece of land be given to me?”

“It should, it should!” At this moment, who dared to say the word no?

Li Qingshan obtained what he desired, and raised his head, laughing loudly: “Justice actually still exists in this world!” He suddenly took back his laughter and lowered his head back. The expression on his face shifted, sometimes heavy and sometimes relieved, with an unspeakable sorrow mixed inside. He looked at the short knife in his hand: “Justice was actually here.”

He frowned and muttered: “There are no gods above, justice is merely inside the blade. There are no gods above, justice is merely inside the blade...” Unconsciously his voice became louder and louder, shocking the residence.

He was originally indignant and set on releasing this foul resentment. He wouldn't have been concerned even if he had to kill people. But at this moment he only felt it was flavorless. He took his knife back and turned around, leaving without acknowledging the various people in the yard. In a blink he disappeared without a trace.

The workers ate a free banquet and watched a good show, so they dispersed contentedly. Li Qingshan was on every tongue, and their faces were filled with admiration.

Steward Liu wiped the cold sweat from his forehead. He already knew that it would be harder than hard if he wanted to organize a party against Li Qingshan now. Admittedly he controlled the land, but the workers weren't his slaves, and they wouldn't follow his orders. Even slaves could rise up in riot. It would be an extreme disaster if he roused every worker into rebelling against him.

But fortunately Li the Second clearly distinguished gratitude and grudges. Since he'd already said so much this day, he wouldn't be scheming revenge anymore. Now he could sleep easy. Although this banquet wasn't a success, it could still barely count as achieving his purposes. He saw Village Chief Li helped by his two sons, and although there was still some shame left on his face, his expression was also relieved, seemingly thinking the same thing as himself.

The two of them looked at each other, both feeling awkward.

Tiger Li wasn't convinced and said: "Dad, we could wait until my big brother comes back. With his martial arts, I don't believe he can't punish this Li the Second."

Panther Li also said: "Uncle Liu, isn't elder brother Liu also in Suncheer City?"

It just happened that Village Chief Li had a bellyful of anger he needed to release, and he said ferociously: "You all shut the hell up, how did I give birth to useless things like you!"

Steward Liu didn't reply either. They were both people who had experienced winds and snow, and very clearly understood that the wise man looked after his own hide. They were absolutely not willing to provoke danger for the sake of a little anger.

"You bunch of useless people. The gods are already angry, he won't be able to live long." The witch who had been entirely silent so far suddenly spoke mystically, her voice full of poison.

Under the great sun, many people couldn't help shivering. People of this era all venerated ghosts and gods, while the witch was precisely someone who could communicate with the gods. They thought back to earlier when Li Qingshan said "there are no gods above," maybe he really stirred the gods' anger.

Some people even remembered that there was once in the village a family who had invited the witch to cure their sick child. The witch also said that the child was possessed by ghosts. She used fire to burn and water to drown, then finally smothered him in a quilt,

saying that they had to force the ghost out. In the end that child was smothered to death.

The witch only said that it was as the King of Hell decided, then no one said anything, but the adults in that family didn't yield. Especially the child's mother who went everyday in front of the witch's door and threw curses and insults. This thing caused an extremely great harm to the witch's prestige in the village, but a few days later the child's mother suddenly died of sickness, her death inexplicable.

The witch only said that the child missed his mother in the underworld. No one dared to disrespect her since then. But Li Qingshan had kicked her in front of the crowd and cursed her, he'd already thoroughly offended her.

“Steward Liu, this child is your fate's disaster, now the gods will help you avoid calamities and solve your troubles...”

Steward Liu hurriedly ordered someone to wrap some incense, wine, and meat for the witch. The witch looked again at Village Chief Li. Village Chief Li also clenched his teeth and groped out a piece of broken silver, sending the witch away.

A worker hugged those things and followed after the witch, not daring to say much. They came in front of a house made of green bricks. Apart from Steward Liu and Village Chief Li, she was the only one in the village who could afford to live in a house of tiles and bricks.

Incense tables and incense burners were set in the hall, the smoke drifting inside all day long. It was a residence, and also a temple.

“Little An, Little An, grandmother is back.” The witch suddenly spoke hoarsely, a secretive smile emerging on her face filled with wrinkles. There was no way one could call it benevolent.

The worker knew that the witch had no grandchildren whatsoever, and trembled in fear. He hastily put the things down, but suddenly he felt someone pull on his trouser leg. When he turned his head back he didn't see anyone. He shouted loudly: “Mum!” and frantically stumbled out. A burst of shrill laughter came behind him.

“Little An, let grandmother tell you, someone bullied grandmother.”

In the empty hall, no one answered.

“What, you actually dare to disobey grandmother...” The witch's expression abruptly became malevolent. She let out a burst of insults and shook a bronze bell in her hand.

An evil wind suddenly rose inside the house.

After a long while, the witch restored her mildness: “Right, now that's right. Grandmother doesn't want to hit you either, my obedient grandchild.”

From beginning to end, there was only her talking to herself.

The green bull had ran off to who knew where by the time Li Qingshan returned to his house. It was probably off to hunt beasts for his sake again.

He took advantage of his drunkenness and practiced the [Bull Demon Strong Fist]. He couldn't have been any more familiar with the three basic styles already, and his body started to move on its own. His mind was still reminiscing all that had happened today. The thing that had looked so fearsome to him actually couldn't even withstand a single blow. If he had turned tail in front of Steward Liu's house and made his escape, how would he have been able to see through this secret?

In this matter, his genuine enemy wasn't Steward Liu or Village Chief Li, but the fear deep inside himself. What was a genuinely mighty man? The [Tao Te Ching](#) had given the answer long ago already, "one who overcomes others is strong, one who overcomes himself is mighty."

The Tao Te Ching is a classic Chinese daoist text.

"The brave is fearless!" Li Qingshan roared those four words as if he'd broken through an invisible barrier, and there suddenly was a kind of momentum pressing fearlessly forward in his fist technique. Whatever the difficulties and dangers lying in front of him, he had to straighten his back and strike through, never bowing his head and never retreating.

There are no gods above, I am a god. Justice isn't in the heart of men, it is in my hands.

In his four limbs and torso, every muscles seemed to connect under this determination, and his punch could link together strength from the whole body. He had the feeling that if he had to contend face to face with the two brothers Tiger Li and Panther Li together right now, he was fully confident he could defeat them even without a weapon.

Chapter 11: Evil Spirit Tangling The Body

His courage lifted his strength, while his strength lifted his courage, both complementing each other.

He became hungry again when he finished his training at sunset. He was still very thin, entirely unlike the sturdy bodies of Tiger or Panther Li. Only he knew very clearly that he didn't waste a shred of the blood and flesh essence from the deer meat, and had absorbed all of it inside his body.

His body was like a bottomless hole, greedily digesting all wine and meat, transforming them into traces of power.

After the fist training, Li Qingshan sat on the ground and closed his eyes. He quieted his mind and sensed every change inside himself. Overly pulling muscles and tendons was a very painful thing. He still remembered the second day he'd practiced the [Bull Demon Strong Fist], the pain was so great he almost couldn't get up.

The green bull didn't try to persuade him, so he still persisted and trained through the pain. Now through the continuous effort of a dozen days of practice, it finally became a little better. No, it should be his ability to endure that became a little stronger. According to reason, his body should have been able to acclimate itself after the first few days, but the pain on didn't diminish in the least, as if every day was the first day he started training.

Every change of his body was vividly mirrored in his mind, but

unfortunately he couldn't sense any so-called qi. According to the green bull, no matter what type of supernatural skill, you needed to sense the flow of qi and cultivate a trace of true qi before you could said be have genuine set foot inside the dao. But after all, the time he'd cultivated was too short.

At this time, he suddenly felt a trace of chill flowing behind his neck, like a sudden breeze.

But there was absolutely no wind right now, so there couldn't have been any breeze.

“Could it be this so-called qi?”

Li Qingshan felt delighted and focused all of his attention on that chill, but he gradually felt that the chill slowly penetrated inside his skin, going deeper and deeper, sinking inside his bones and even his soul, becoming extremely gloomy and cold. It made him very uncomfortable.

Li Qingshan shook his head. He stood up and punched a few times. The gloomy cold dissipated a little, but it coiled around him once more when he sat back.

He had no idea where the problem was. He simply went to the creek beside the house and cleaned his body. The night's moonlight was clear and bright, and when he looked into the water, he saw a child with a pale face clinging expressionlessly on his body.

Although his courage wasn't weak already, he was still shocked into cold sweat. The current scene reminded him of a movie he'd seen in his previous world, "The Grudge."

If he were an ordinary person, he would certainly have been scared silly, but good and bad Li Qingshan had also been in contact with a monster bull for so long, so he looked straight at the child in the water: "What kind of thing are you? Why did you climb on me?"

The child only moved his head, and at the same time a burst of ripples appeared on the water's surface. The child's reflection vanished, but that gloomy and cold air still clearly stayed on him.

Li Qingshan strove to steady his mind: "I've run into a ghost. I have no idea why this little ghost is pestering me. I can only wait until brother bull comes back and discuss it with him. Fortunately it's not going to claim my life in the short run."

He had no great assurance in his heart, and he felt fear arise in him. The erosion of the gloomy chilly air sped up, and he hurried to practice the [Bull Demon Strong Fist] once more. Only during this time would the gloomy chill disappear. But after all he wasn't a tireless robot and still had to sit down and rest, and during that time he would find the chill especially hard to endure.

As he reached further into the depths of the night, the gloomy air was at its strongest.

The gloomy chill had already invaded more than half of Li

Qingshan's body. There was no greatly obvious pain, it was only his hands and feet gradually becoming numb, and his five senses gradually blurring.

The sensation of extreme danger made his brain run at full speed.

He had heard people say that inside everyone's body there was yang qi that could restrain yin ghosts. He thought at the way his blood veins gushed with energy while he trained his fist technique, so the little ghost didn't dare come close. Hence while he was sitting he strove to imitate the same feeling as when he trained. He closed his eyes, manipulated his thoughts, contracted his muscles, and indeed it was somewhat useful, reluctantly withstanding the gloomy air's onslaught.

He endured this way through the whole night, his consciousness sometimes murky and sometimes clear, fiercely training his mental and willpower, until his will was almost defeated.

The roosters sang and the day brightened. Li Qingshan suddenly opened his eyes. Sunlight fell from the branch tips over his face, a little harsh on his eyes. The gloomy chill vanished from his body. The green bull happened to be looking at him from not too far away, its face filled with interest.

Li Qingshan said: "Brother bull, where did you go? Do you know what happened to me last night?"

"I've been back for a while. Aren't you talking about the little ghost on your body?"

“So you just watched like that?”

“What else do you want me to do?”

Li Qingshan grinned and didn't say anything. The green bull had told him long ago, if you meet some danger don't expect me to assist you. It never gave him the opportunity to rely on it from the beginning. Looking at the gazelle at its feet, he was even more unable to say anything. The green bull had already provided him with the most important help, and he couldn't rely on it for every single thing.

Basking under the warm sun, Li Qingshan stood up and stretched his body: “Fortunately the little ghost doesn't dare to come out during the day, otherwise I really couldn't hold on anymore. Brother bull, good or bad I'm still cultivating a daoist technique, don't tell me I can't handle a small phantom.”

“If you didn't train a supernatural technique you wouldn't have been able to endure last night. Wait until you cultivate the strength of one bull, your body will be filled with exuberant blood and you naturally won't need to fear a tiny trivial ghost.”

“That's in who knows how long.”

“Apart from that, I still have another way.”

“What way?”

“Things like yin ghosts are most afraid of killing auras. If you have the blood of a hundred lives or so on your hands, I guarantee you’ll easily ward off all kinds of evils. This little ghost won’t dare to come within ten steps of you.”

Li Qingshan rolled his eyes: “Don’t tell me you want me to slaughter this whole Crouching Bull Village?”

“That might not be unfeasible actually. How about it, want to try? Hehe” The green bull laughed.

“I might as well cut you first and make steak!” Li Qingshan ignored him, processed the gazelle, and ate breakfast. He first shoved this thing to the back of his mind, enduring the fatigue of mind and body as he wholeheartedly started the day’s training.

But as soon as he started cultivating he felt that today wasn’t the same as usual. There was a thin and weak gossamer of “qi” flowing inside his body, and if he didn’t concentrate he absolutely couldn’t sense it.

This qi wasn’t like the true qi described inside wuxia novels that was stored inside the dantian and flowed through the meridians, but scattered everywhere like wandering fishes, traveling through his four limbs and hundred bones. When he waved his fist fiercely, the thread of qi flowed into his arms and his fists, but this was also the matter of an instant.

Once he relaxed his focus, the thread of qi ran off who knew

where like an urchin, hardly under his control at all. He told this situation to the green bull.

The green bull wasn't surprised, saying meaningfully instead: "You have to thank that little ghost for being able to sense qi so fast. It was a blessing in disguise."

In the critical juncture between life and death, Li Qingshan had mobilized all of his focus and willpower to resist the invasion of the gloomy chill. The little ghost had left, but the focus and willpower stayed behind, becoming a shred of true qi.

"So it turns out to be true qi?" Li Qingshan looked at his own palms: "What's the actual use of this true qi?"

"Refine vitality and produce qi, refine vitality and produce qi, isn't it all for the sake of this whiff of qi? What use do you think it has? If you can't sense qi, even if you cultivated a lifetime you'd only be a country peasant with some ability at most, and wouldn't amount to anything. If I had to say the benefits, I can't even count them all, just slowly experience it on your own."

Chapter 12: Long Blade In Hand

Li Qingshan thought that the green bull's words weren't entirely honest and seemed to conceal something, but he was too busy with his delight to think too much about it. He immediately trained his fist technique and tried to sense this true qi's uses.

Sure enough, he put his finger on something not long later. When he cultivated his [Bull Demon Strong Fist] today, it was smoother and more relaxed than at any time before, like an old rusty machinery that's been smeared in lubricants. It felt unspeakably satisfying.

It was also much faster to regain his breath. It seemed like a triviality, but when ordinary people fought they had to spare some energy and they didn't dare to attack with all their strength. Because if the blow with the whole of their strength were to be dodged, it was difficult to avoid a momentary body stiffness and leave a most important opening.

He wouldn't have to worry about that. In the time it took others to hit one punch, he could fire out three fists with the whole of his energy. Even if his opponent had equivalent strength, he still wouldn't be his match.

Li Qingshan's dozen days of painstaking training finally obtained this "shred" of result, and he couldn't restrain his great joy, feeling that he was another step closer to his goals.

But remembering the last night's exhausting danger, his

expression became cold: “However, I’d like to know who sent this blessing my way.”

The green bull said as if it wasn’t paying attention: “There’s no door to luck or misfortune, man brings them upon himself.”

Light flashed in Li Qingshan’s mind. Those were words he said when the witch came to his door to ask for boar meat. The little ghost certainly didn’t cling on his body for no reason at all. After careful considerations, he immediately came to some conclusions.

He was born on the earth of the small mountain village and grew up on this earth. He had a rough idea about all the major matters that had happened inside the village. Things that could be called major weren’t many to begin with in this small village. Among them was precisely when a household became ruined after a child fell ill, a several years ago.

Li Qingshan was also a child back then, and he had known this kid called Little Hair. He had never expected in a thousand years that this kid would die just like that.

It was also precisely because of this example that Li Qingshan obediently restored to his previous state after drinking blessed water, and never dared to reveal anything extraordinary afterwards, while loathing the witch to the extreme at the same time.

Little Hair’s mother death was very fishy. It had happened in the space of a single night without any clear reason.

Li Qingshan originally thought that she couldn't bear the sorrow of her loss, but thinking now it was clear she had been invaded by the gloomy chill. He suddenly stood up, cold light flashing in his eyes: "So it was like this, she can't be spared!"

The green bull said: "Just go kill her then!"

"It's not that simple." Li Qingshan sat back cross-legged and bowed his head as he sank deep into his thoughts.

The witch wasn't the same as Liu Baldy that lousy wretch. Not only her influence was extremely great inside the village, she also had some fame in all the countryside nearby. People from other places often came to ask for her divinations.

He'd have no choice but to leave far away if he killed her. It was even possible he'd be reported to the government offices and listed as a criminal. Moreover he had no evidence right now and couldn't definitely accuse her. The most important thing was, since she could order a small ghost about, did she also have other means? He had no way to know.

The green bull stayed on the side and didn't interrupt, his heart full of approval. If blood had rushed to Li Qingshan's head because of his prestige from the previous day, and he had gone straight to the witch to cause a scene and kill her, it would have been a waste of his painstaking efforts.

It was difficult to obtain perfection in this world. It was hard for

a brave man not to be impetuous and thoughtless, while a smart man was often hesitant and lacked some decisiveness and staunchness. The words “sword valor and [zither heart](#)” were the rarest of them all.

A zither heart means a gentle and refined heart

Li Qingshan made up his mind and dragged his legs to the village.

“Oh it’s the Second Son, did you eat? If you haven’t yet come eat at my house.” At the village entrance, an old burly man held a hoe and was digging the soil in his vegetable garden. He greeted Li Qingshan warmly when he saw him.

The things that happened in the great yard of the Liu residence had already spread to the village’s four corners. The originally obscure and unknown Second Son of the Li family was now already someone famous in the village. Whether old or small, they all had more respect for this young man.

Li Qingshan answered each of them as he crossed through half the village, coming to a small yard with several willow trees planted in front. A small old man with ruined clothes leaned on a tree, already dead drunk so early in the morning. He had a little the posture of a lofty hermit.

Li Qingshan clearly knew that this was no lofty hermit but only an ordinary farmer. He was also Little Hair’s father, called Wealthy Li. He actually wasn’t even forty, but he looked fifty to sixty. After the death of his wife and child, he’d neglected his farm work, and drowned his sorrow in alcohol everyday, acting a little

deranged.

Seeing Li Qingshan come close, Wealthy Li mumbled vaguely: “Come, drink, drink,” his intoxicated breath rushing out.

Li Qingshan frowned. He grabbed Wealthy Li and dragged him inside the house, then without saying two words he scooped water with a ladle and shoved it in Wealthy Li’s mouth, choking him into coughing and puking on the doorsteps.

Li Qingshan glanced around at this thatched house. Everything was worn-out and broken. Spider webs covered the window frames. It could really be called “four bare walls at home.” He remembered that Wealthy Li’s house used to be a famously well-off house in the village, and the lands he owned were second only to Steward Liu. He was worthy of this name his parents gave him and his whole family lived prosperously.

Who could bear to think that there was no permanence for men in the world, and that a suddenly disaster would bring such an outcome. Li Qingshan couldn’t help but sigh. The little joys of mortals were really too fragile. But his temperament was firm and he carried great ambitions in his chest. He most despised those who let themselves go and wallowed in their dejection, so his actions weren’t too polite either.

Wealthy Li angrily said: “What...What.. What are you doing?”

“Big uncle Li, are you drunk?”

Wealthy Li saw that Li Qingshan's gaze wasn't so well-disposed, and he quivered. He wasn't deaf and blind yet, and he was keenly aware of what Li Qingshan had done in the village those few days; this was really an evil star. "What...What do you want?"

"Do you know how Little Hair's mother died?" Li Qingshan went straight to the point.

"I don't know, I don't know anything." Wealthy Li was scared until his face became white when he heard, and he tried to go outside without caring about anything else.

Li Qingshan grabbed his thin dry wrist: "Aren't you letting down your wife and son like this?"

Wealthy Li's body froze: "Second Son, it's not that I don't want to tell you. It's not trouble you can stir up, don't throw your life away in vain."

"I wasn't looking for trouble, but trouble already came knocking at my door. If I had to live like you, I might as well throw my life away. You only need to tell me what happened back then."

Wealthy Li was alarmed when he heard: "What, already came to your door?" He hesitated a long while, and started talking after taking a long breath in.

"After Little Hair's mom shouted abuses in front of the witch's door, she came back and went to sleep. The next morning she

couldn't wake up anymore. Her body became cold and blueish. Many creepy things happened that night, and also... I also saw..."

"What did you see?"

"A child!"

Li Qingshan was finally certain that the assassin was indeed that witch.

Moreover the witch had even eerily told Wealthy Li that Little Hair not only missed his mother in the underworld, he also missed his father. It had scared Wealthy Li into a great offering.

Li Qingshan slapped the wall. "It's truly intolerable bullying. Don't tell me you never thought about taking revenge for your wife and son?"

Wealthy Li's face wholly flushed red at the contempt in Li Qingshan's words and suddenly ran inside the house. He took out a long bundle from the bottom of the bed.

He untied the bundle. Inside was a [blade](#), a top-notch steel blade.

Presumably a dao, a single-edged curved sword akin to a saber. Culturally it's seen as less noble and refined than the straight sword.

Li Qingshan pulled the blade out of the scabbard. A cold and

threatening chill assaulted him. It reflected his face, his hair and beard clearly visible.

This blade's handle was approximatively one foot long and faintly curved, with black silk wrapped around it. It felt very comfortable when held in the hand. The blade itself was two feet long and five inches wide. It was so much more powerful than Li Qinshan's short knife that was only one inch long and of poor make.

The back of this blade was very thick and it felt heavy in his hand. The edge was extremely sharp. He randomly waved it around and heard the sound of air being broken. He couldn't hold in his praise: "What a good blade!" He'd never seen such a good blade in the market. If he really had to buy it, he was afraid he'd need to exchange several mu's of fertile land in exchange.

Chapter 13: Seeing Ghosts With Bull Tears

Wealthy Li said: “This is the hundred-folded blade I bought in the Golden Spear Shop in Suncheer City.” He wasn’t a dimwit, how could he not be moved by the death of his wife and child? He was filled with hatred for the witch. This blade was the proof, the proof he was still a hot-blooded man.

But in the end he was still an ordinary farmer. On one side was wine and on another side was a blade, but from beginning to end he never had the resolve to pick up the blade, and he fell day after day in the depression of intoxication, ultimately discovering that he didn’t even have the strength to hold the blade anymore. But he still had kept this blade all along and never used it to exchange for wine.

Wealthy Li tears wildly flowed on his face as he reminisced past events. “I didn’t dare sell this blade. I also can’t sell this blade. If I sold it I would have nothing left.”

Li Qingshan’s thoughts surged but he didn’t bat an eye outwardly. He quietly slid the blade back into its sheath: “If you believe me, then let me take care of this blade. I will certainly give you an accounting.”

Wealthy Li turned around and wave his hand. Li Qingshan strode out, hurrying on the way, itching to cut the witch with one slash of the blade. He only calmed down after returning to his house and training a set of his fist technique.

“Being able to order ghosts, what level of supernatural power is that? How is it compared to my Nine Bulls and Two Tigers?”

“The powerful can commend ten thousand ancestral ghosts, be called ghost emperors, and be friends with gods and demons. The weak can only bully ordinary people, and their cultivation will not only not be beneficial but instead be harmful. The gloomy chill will invade their bodies, ruining their sanity and perverting their temperament.”

“This witch is naturally the latter type.” Li Qingshan became relieved. He also expected this, otherwise the witch wouldn’t have eaten a kick of his without doing anything back, only taking revenge after waiting for so long.

“Don’t underestimate her. You can’t see the ghost, so you’re unable to guard against many of her methods.”

Li Qingshan’s thoughts made a turn inside his mind: “Elder brother bull, I heard that when people smear bull tears on their eyes, they can see ghosts, is that true?”

“Don’t get any idea about me, this old bull never shed a tear in its life.”

“When men have tears but don’t shed them out, it is merely because they never met with heart-breaking grief. Elder brother bull, have you never been heart-broken?”

The green bull turned its bullhead away and ignored him.

Li Qingshan knew that elder brother bull was genuinely bullheaded, so he didn't try to persuade it any further.

These days the two of them talked often, and he had faintly observed the green bull's mood. It didn't want Li Qingshan to rely on itself. Your own road had to be traveled by yourself, and the things you did had to be seen to the end by yourself.

When dusk came, the green bull suddenly gave Li Qingshan a small porcelain bottle. It didn't explain anything and just walked out. It climbed on the Crouching Bull Hill, and watched the sun set over the hundred thousand mountains.

Li Qingshan opened the bottle. Inside was a transparent light blue liquid. His thoughts jumped and he beamed brightly. He said thanks to the shadow of the green bull's back. He dipped a blade of wild grass inside the liquid, and very carefully dripped it into his eyes.

At first he didn't feel anything, but as time went on he felt his eyes become warmer and warmer, warm enough to boiling hot. Without these days' arduous cultivation, he would have been about to scream in pain.

Inside the house of green bricks and tiles submerged in smoke, a group of outsiders that came to request a divination watched with wide eyes and open mouths as a charm paper fluttered up in the air. Then it suddenly ignited itself, and the flame was even blue.

They couldn't see a pale-faced child exerting the utmost of his strength to hold the charm paper up. They only bowed their heads, and with reverence and trepidation they gifted all their silver to the witch, then retreated out backwards.

The witch carefully collected the money, her face suddenly becoming ferocious: "What happened, that Li the Second isn't dead yet? Did you do things half-heartedly? Do you really need me to sort you out?"

The child's wooden face exposed fear, desperately shaking his head.

The witch suddenly shook the little bell in her hand, and the child randomly knocked around inside the room in pain, carrying bursts of gloomy wind around that blew the smoke away.

After a long while, the witch stopped in the bell: "Be obedient, listen to grandmother, grandmother won't treat you unfairly." She gave an embroidery needle as thin as a bull hair to the child: "Take it and go stab his eyes blind."

The child held the needle with great difficulty and rode the night wind as he flew toward the Crouching Bull Hill.

In the darkness of the night, Li Qingshan was actually sitting inside his courtyard with his eyes closed.

The child went toward him. He raised the embroidery needle and slowly stabbed toward Li Qingshan's eyes.

In ordinary people's eyes, there would only be a needle floating on its own in the air, not to mention this needle was extremely thin. Even during the day it would be difficult to see clearly, to say nothing about the dark night.

Li Qingshan seemed to feel something and suddenly opened his eyes. He disregarded the embroidery needle almost within his reach, and fixated the child's pitch-black eyes with a gaze sharp as a sword: "What are you doing?" His eyes were lively, as if two flames burned within.

At dusk, just when Li Qingshan was hurting until he couldn't bear anymore, the shred of almost indiscernible breath inside his body had suddenly moved. It traveled to his eyes, and the sensation of pain had immediately reduced by quite a bit.

When the painful sensation of heat vanished, a refreshing feeling moved inside his eyes, filling him with happiness. It was precisely at that moment that the omen of danger emerged in his heart, and he opened his eyes all of a sudden, seeing just in time the little ghost from the previous night holding an embroidery needle and standing in front of him.

He was surprised, and felt a little lingering fear. He originally thought that the witch only had some little tricks with ghosts and would absolutely not assault him frontally. In any case the little ghost's gloomy chill couldn't injure him, so he carelessly underestimated the enemy. If it weren't for his sudden ability to

see ghosts, it would have been difficult to avoid this sinister plot and have his eyes ruined. This way it would have instead been better to act and kill first.

This child was even more surprised and trembled all over from Li Qingshan's angry stare. The embroidery needle slipped and fell on the ground, while the child floated back, retreating far away.

Li Qingshan carefully examined this little ghost, discovering that he was only six or seven years old, looking very pretty. If not for the pale face, he could really have been like those golden boys and jade maidens who attended the immortals. He wore a gown made from silky gauze, probably his attire before death. He didn't look like a little enslaved ghost but like a little prince from a great family.

The child realized that Li Qingshan could see him and suddenly didn't dare move forward. But he was also afraid that he would be punished if he went back without completing the mission, so he didn't dare leave either, staying rigidly in place.

There was already no fear left in Li Qingshan. It was always the things that couldn't be seen that were the most terrifying. He could see clearly now and discovered that the child was even more afraid than him. He opened his mouth to ask: "What's your name, where do you come from?"

No matter what he asked, this child only stayed wooden and didn't answer. An idea came to Li Qingshan: "You can't talk?"

The child hesitated a moment then nodded his head.

Li Qingshan thought about how it was only being controlled by the witch. He met misfortune and died at such a young age, and he was maybe even killed by the witch. So Li Qingshan also felt some compassion and his attitude became a little gentler.

“Yesterday you were glued so close, what are you afraid of now? Come a little closer, I have things to ask you.”

The child saw that his expression had changed and wasn't so fearsome anymore. He approached a few steps closer with the appearance of a little insecure animal.

Li Qingshan said: “Since you don't want to talk, just answer by nodding or shaking your head. Do you understand me when I talk like this?”

The child nodded.

This was how a man and a ghost started to communicate.

Chapter 14: Break And Enter

Li Qingshan asked many things, and the child answered them one by one as if he didn't know how to lie, either nodding or shaking his head. But he could only answer simple questions, and he would only stare blankly if faced with complex questions.

When asked what his name was, where he came from, he only shook his head strongly, and when asked what other fancy tricks the witch had, he only vacantly stood there.

Even so, Li Qingshan also understood many things. This child had indeed been harmed to death by the witch and been refined into a little ghost at her orders. Originally he could talk, but after the witch poured him a bowl of medicine he couldn't anymore.

Li Qingshan guessed that the witch had kidnapped this child and was afraid he'd randomly say things on the way, so she poisoned him into a mute. Whenever he mentioned the witch, the child would show a face full of terror.

Li Qingshan softly said: "Don't worry. I won't harm you, I'll kill that witch and release you."

Unconsciously, the child went closer to Li Qingshan, and when he lifted his head, his small face had now an intimate expression.

Li Qingshan showed an appeasing smile and tried to rub his head, but his hand went through his body. He immediately froze.

The child's expression suddenly dimmed. He lowered his head, tears silently flowing out.

Li Qingshan suddenly felt sadness arise from within and hissed at the sky all of a sudden for a long while. Why were there always so many injustices in the world? Humans harmed each other, how was it any less cruel than any evil spirit, demon, or ghostly monsters?

The child stared and looked with surprise at Li Qingshan.

Under the moonlight, there were actually crystal drops at the eye corners on this young man of unwavering will.

Li Qingshan said in self-ridicule: "Indeed the reason men don't easily let out their tears is because they haven't been met with grief yet. I'm making you laugh."

The child stood on tiptoes. He touched Li Qingshan's cheek and collected a drop of tear, carefully grasping it in his palm as if it was very heavy.

"Don't take it!" Li Qingshan blushed red and suddenly somewhat understood the green bull's awkwardness. How could a man's tears be so easily given to someone else?

Then he remembered that the green bull also said that small weak ghosts had no substance. They could only turn the illusory

into reality and manipulate material objects after cultivating to a certain level. This child was weak and small. In all likelihood he could only hold extremely light things.

The child was merely watching the transparent liquid inside his palm.

Li Qingshan was helpless and could only look around, feeling a little weird. Why did the sky darken so late today? Although the scenery around the little house was a little dim, everything was still clearly visible.

But when he raised his head and saw the moon, he understood that it wasn't the sky that had darkened late, but his vision that had become brighter. It didn't fear the night, like the incomparable clarity when a window was wiped off from the layer of dust and dirt covering it.

Li Qingshan murmured to himself: "Brother bull is indeed a spirit monster, his tears even have such wonderful uses."

"It's a little late, I have to sleep. I couldn't get a good rest yesterday because of you, and I still have things to do tomorrow. I have to refill my mind and energy."

Li Qingshan went back to his room to sleep. The child crouched in front of his door, the silhouette seeming half-transparent under the beams of moonlight, just like the teardrop in his hand.

Li Qingshan sank into very deep sleep and only woke up when the sky was fully bright, feeling comfortable all over. The child had already left. He probably didn't dare to stay active during the day.

He washed himself, and casually practiced the [Bull Demon Strong Fist] once. He took the thick-backed steel blade he got from Wealthy Li, then after a little more consideration, he picked up a few pieces of gazelle meat before going out.

The three scoundrels were sitting facing each other with a miserable look. After Baldy Liu's death, their small band lost their main core and their life inside the village was even more difficult. It was really a case of "[when mice cross the street, everyone curses and hits them](#)"

Another saying from comrade Mao.

How could they learn Baldy Liu's viciousness, or Li Qingshan's fierceness. Suddenly even being able to eat had become a problem, not even mentioning eating meat and drinking wine. They could only get some work at Steward Liu's house and barely obtain some food, how could they keep their previous easy style.

At this time, Li Qingshan suddenly tread inside the door. The three scoundrels hurriedly greet him. They noticed his expression was grave, a blade in one hand and meat in the other, automatically radiating power and prestige. No one dared to underestimate him because of his young age.

The three scoundrels' voices also became more gentle as they exaggeratedly praised Li Qingshan's good deeds from the previous

day. Li Qingshan ignored those flattering words and put the meat down. “I still need to trouble you for something. This meat is a reward, including for the last time.”

“How would we have the nerve. Second Son you just say a word and us brothers will cut down mountains and set fire to the seas.” The three scoundrels said it like this, while their hands couldn’t be more hurried in grabbing the gazelle meat.

Just like the last time, Li Qingshan said: “Follow me!” and turned around, walking away. However this time wasn’t false bravado, but an unquestionable order.

The three scoundrels didn’t dare hesitate and obediently fell in step behind him.

Li Qingshan borrowed hoes and shovels from farmer families nearby and returned to Wealthy Li’s house.

The time was already noon. The villagers were done busying themselves with the morning farm work, and it was the time they went back home for lunch. They saw the recently famous Li Second Son carrying tools and leading three scoundrels. They had no idea what he wanted to do and followed curiously behind. This time almost the whole village was affected.

They saw him go to the front of Wealthy Li’s house and thought, is he going to teach a lesson to this drunken ghost this time? I don’t know how this drunken ghost offended him? They felt a little discomfort. Relying on numbers to bully a pitiable broken

household was the opposite behavior compared to shouting at the steward and village chief inside the Liu house's great yard. One was unflinching in the face of threats and force, one was relying on strength to bully the weak.

But the three scoundrels were very happy: "I knew long ago that this old drunken ghost was a good-for-nothing." They even slapped their chests and volunteered: "I'll drag him out right now." They hadn't been so happy for a long time. They wanted to display their prestige on this Wealthy Li and beat him up in front of everyone.

Li Qingshan glared at them and shouted loudly: "Are you coming?"

Just as everyone was a little baffled, Wealthy Li ran out of the house and said clenching his teeth: "I'm coming!"

His expression was surprisingly sober, making all the villagers feel strange. Usually this Wealthy Li always had an intoxicated appearance. They didn't know that after Li Qingshan had left, Wealthy Li didn't drink a single drop of alcohol, living in expectant hope day and night. He didn't think that Li Qingshan would already come find him the next day.

This time, the villagers were even more unable to make head or tail of it, and their interest was even more hooked.

Li Qingshan nodded, and with his head held high he walked in front, leading this group of people to the front of the witch's green-bricked residence. The gate was shut tightly. It looked like she'd

already been alarmed, so he ordered the three scoundrels: “Break it open!”

The three scoundrels suddenly became afraid. There was no one who wasn't afraid when facing this witch. Even when Baldy Liu was still there he didn't dare offend her either. This green-bricked residence combining living quarters and temple exuded even more a mysterious and sacred breath. They had been hearing about the many strange things happening inside this house since a long time ago.

The other village farmers also became agitated when they saw he wanted to find trouble for the witch.

Someone urged him: “Second Son, don't act rashly!”

Someone people also said terrified: “You'll attract retribution if you disrespect the gods.” This was someone who firmly believed in the witch. If not for his fear of the blade in Li Qingshan's hand, he might even have approached and argued with him.

Li Qingshan didn't say a word, and with a “Bang” kicked the wooden door open. The bar locking the door broke with a loud noise, shocking the villagers into silence.

Li Qingshan turned his head back and ordered the three scoundrels: “Keep guard outside, no one else is allowed in.”

The three scoundrels braced themselves and agreed. At least they

didn't need to go inside.

Li Qingshan crossed the threshold and walked to the yard in great strides. He came to the house's door, about to kick it down.

The door opened on its own. It was clearly noon and the sun's glare was bright, but inside the house was a patch of pitch darkness. A gust of gloomy chill rushed out.

The witch wore a brightly colored witch robe and was sitting on the god's altar, saying in an odd voice: "Li the Second, do you know your sins?"

"Zing!" Li Qingshan drew out the thick-backed blade and shouted in a loud voice: "Hand over your life!"

Chapter 15: The Witch's Death

The witch pointed a finger and a cloud of dark haze flew in front of him. There were many faces struggling in pain faintly visible inside the haze.

This was the witch's killing card, called "Ghost Haze." It gathered thick gloom and resentment. She usually kept it in an earthen jar filled with the ashes of the dead, and buried it underground to absorb the gloomy chill. It would only be used at critical moments. In any case, this ghost haze had no awareness and only possessed hatred, so it was very hard to control. It could turn on her instead at the slightest carelessness.

Today she saw Li Qingshan come with such a threatening momentum and had hurriedly opened the jar. This ghost haze's might was also extraordinary. Ordinary beings would immediately fall down and lose consciousness as soon as they're shrouded by the ghostly haze. The most insidious thing was that this ghost fog was the same as ghosts and stood between reality and illusion, entirely invisible to ordinary people.

If Li Qingshan's eyes hadn't been unusually clear, he would have been fooled this time. Those days' of painstaking training manifested their results. He slanted his body, dodged the ghost haze, and directly charged at the witch.

The witch didn't expect Li Qingshan to be able to see the haze and suddenly panicked. She quickly shook a bronze bell: "Little An Little An! Come out for your grandmother, kill him!"

This child called “Little An” squatted in a corner, his face full of suffering, but he hugged his head and didn’t move one bit.

During the time she spoke, Li Qingshan resorted to the “Bull Demon Ground Stamp.” His foot heavily stepped on the ground, leaving a very deep footprint behind as he flew forward and slashed his blade down.

Cold light flashed and fresh blood splashed in the four directions. The witch’s hand that clutched the bronze bell was thin like chicken claws, and it was cut off by Li Qingshan together with the wrist.

Li Qingshan didn’t even have time to examine the results of his slash when he felt gloomy air pour forth behind his back. This ghost haze sensed the breath of a living person, and like a wild beast smelling the scent of fresh blood, it attacked driven by its hatred.

Li Qingshan didn’t dare to stop and sprinted forward. He sensed that the ghost haze didn’t catch up, and instead he heard a burst of shrill screams behind his back. He turned around and saw the cloud of ghost haze enveloping the witch silhouette, the many faces within biting and gnawing at her body.

Even Li Qingshan hadn’t expected this turnaround.

The witch actually lost control of the ghost haze under the pain, and was immediately bitten back instead.

For every grievance there was someone responsible, every debt had a debtor. The witch was the one to initiate evil and ultimately reaped what she had sown. Her body twisted from head to toes, and her flesh withered at a pace visible to the naked eye.

Li Qingshan watched with a very carefree and content feeling in his chest. He laughed loudly.

He originally had a shred of compassion and sympathy in him, but he repressed it down, because he felt it was shameful. Facing an innocent child who had suffered injustices, he was willing to sing in grief and shed his tears. When faced with this kind of person that was even lower than beasts, he wanted to obliterate all sympathy and heartily laugh to the sky.

Many people had originally climbed over the outer yard's walls and were looking toward the house. The villagers were really curious and the three scoundrels were entirely unable to stop all of them, so they could only allow them to do so. They merely occupied the best seats in front of the main door.

They saw Li Qingshan step inside the door, fly up and hack down the witch's hand with his blade, then the witch just fell on the ground and wailed in pain. Amidst this painful wailing, Li Qingshan's laughter seemed like a crazed demon, alarming the crowd and making them tremble in fear.

Many people were so afraid that they fell off the walls. The three scoundrels' legs also went soft and they fell sitting on the ground. They felt incomparable regrets when they remembered that back then they had even mocked and insulted him. Was this kind of

person someone they could afford to provoke?

Li Qingshan saw the ghost haze gradually dissipate, and the hatred within set free in a short moment. The witch laid prone on the ground, breathing her last breaths. She was surprisingly not dead yet, but obviously not far from death either. He guessed that she had cultivated some kind of technique, and it was why she could still hang on.

The witch stretched her one chicken claw left and called the child in the corner, seemingly begging and resenting at the same time: “Little An, Little An!”

Little An watched her both blankly and fearfully. Li Qingshan said: “I’ll send you off!” The thick-backed blade in his hand stabbed down.

Steward Liu and Village Chief had gotten the news and rushed over. They just happened to see this scene, and before they even had time to shout “Spare her life from your blade” or this kind of words, the witch had already given up the ghost. They both looked at each other and they both sweat cold sweats. They remembered that a few days ago the witch was still running her mouth and saying Li Qingshan didn’t have long to live, now today she’d handed her life over.

It was fortunate they didn’t drive Li Qingshan into a corner that day, otherwise no one could know the results.

This was already the second time Li Qingshan killed someone.

Compared to his panic in the darkness the first time, this time he seemed very unperturbed in broad daylight. He made great progress and even he himself was surprised, wondering: “Could it be that the [Bull Demon Strong Fist] stirred the demon nature inside my heart, or could this be my true face?”

In the blurry and deranged modern society of his former world, there were so many people who couldn't unfold their true character. They could only drift along with the current, living while conforming to society's trends. Not mentioning adults thirty or forty years old, even young men and women didn't have any hot blood or great ambitions. He had also been but another face in the crowd, not any different from the next person.

After experiencing the changes of life and death through the wheel of reincarnation, it had stirred the noble aspirations in his chest, and he refused to spend this life in mediocrity. But he'd still been crushed by the bitter life of this small mountain village for fifteen years. Now he finally got his chance, and once his heroic spirit was set free, it was really like a crazy demon as he refused to restrain himself any longer.

Li Qingshan restrained his laughter and said as he turned his head back: “The two of you don't panic, this old scamming wench has only herself to blame and deserved punishment. I still need you two to uphold justice.”

You charge into someone's house in broad daylight and murder people, now you still want us to uphold justice. Those words only spun inside the two's mind and they naturally didn't dare say them out loud.

Suddenly someone rushed out of the crowd and came in front of Li Qingshan. Bang bang bang, he kowtowed three times then lifted his head: “I’m the murderer, it has nothing to do with the Second Son! This old monster wench ruined my household and killed my family. Little Hair, dad took revenge for you!” When he was done talking he was both laughing and in tears at the same time. It was precisely Wealthy Li. This great boulder pressing upon his chest for many years had suddenly been pushed away, and he felt that he would be at peace even if he had to die.

There was no one in the village who didn’t know of Wealthy Li’s bitter experience, and all fell silent.

There was only Steward Liu who exposed some fear and embarrassment. It was precisely because Wealthy Li had met with this disaster, drowning his sorry in alcohol and selling his fertile lands, that he could obtain the “Half Village Liu” nickname. If Li Qingshan suspected he had colluded with the witch, wouldn’t that be a disaster?

Li Qingshan said: “The things I do I take responsibility for, what do I need you to act as the scapegoat? Please follow me!” He called the three scoundrels and some elder folks with prestige inside the village, then together they went to the witch’s backyard.

Li Qingshan turned his head back and nodded towards the eaves. Others followed his gaze but there was only a patch of emptiness there. Little An hid inside the shadows and pointed at an empty spot.

Li Qingshan issued an order and the three scoundrels started digging. Under Li Qingshan's supervision, they one and all exerted their full effort and didn't dare slack off in the slightest. After a short moment of effort, they dug out a great pit and excavated a pile of bones.

Li Qingshan went down and collected the remains. He turned his head back and watched the eaves, then ordered: "Keep digging!" Those weren't Little An's remains.

Under Little An's directions, Li Qingshan made them dig several times more, and they again excavated several white bony skeletons. The surrounding people all exposed horror on their faces. How could so many skeletons been buried in the witch's backyard? Moreover, they all were children's skeletons.

Li Qingshan was also a little aghast, and his face became heavier. He knew that those were the sacrifices to the evil arts the witch cultivated. The cloud of ghost haze filled with resentment that he had seen should certainly have come from this. He only hated that he let the old traitor witch die too easily.

At this time, a "Ding" came, as if they'd hit something. They carefully dug it out. It was a porcelain jar, tightly sealed.

Not waiting for Li Qingshan to stop them, the three scoundrels scrambled to open the jar. A small cloud of black air rushed out, and as if it was afraid of sunlight it directly drilled itself into a scoundrel's mouth and nose.

This scoundrel's body trembled all over then fell to the ground and passed out. In not long of a time no more sound came from him.

Chapter 16: White Bones And White Silver

The other two scoundrels were scared stiff. Their faces became white, and they couldn't move. The thing inside the porcelain jar shone in their eyes. The porcelain jar was filled with sparkling white silver. It was such an amount that they'd never seen in their whole life, and even Steward Liu and those old folks who had a foot inside the grave also showed an expression of temptation.

Li Qingshan pushed them away. They were about to get immediately angry. Even the most cowardly person would get red eyes and a hammering heart for the sake of wealth, becoming more vicious. But then they looked at Li Qingshan and didn't dare to move again.

Li Qingshan didn't care about their thoughts. He pulled the jar out and put it at the side. A very small skeleton emerged under the porcelain jar. This skeleton had long ago lost all flesh and blood, appearing grayish white. It was unknown how many years it'd been buried.

Little An finally nodded. Li Qingshan let out a sigh, watched left and right, then poured out all the silver from the jar and filled it with the white bones instead.

The silver tumbled on the ground and piled into a small hill.

This time, everyone around stared straight at it, not even caring about those few skeletons anymore.

Steward Liu was someone who'd seen the world, and made a rough estimation. This silver was worth at least several hundred [taels](#), and even he was about to have red eyes, let alone others.

A tael's a Chinese monetary unit equivalent to 50 grams (1 3/4th of an oz) of standard silver. Alternatively, it's a weight unit equivalent to 50 grams (1 3/4th of an oz).

In this kind of small mountain village, it could really be called a vast fortune.

Li Qingshan also didn't expect the witch's scamming to have plundered so much silver during those years. As they said: "Wealth moves man's heart." He wasn't an immortal who didn't eat the food of the common people either. He was also tempted by this fortune, after all in the future there were many things to spend money on!

Just talking about meat, he didn't want to always rely on the green bull. The green bull wanted him to be independent, so he was going to show it some independence. Moreover he also wanted a change of taste, maybe he could go to the market and buy a few jars of good wine.

But he also understood that "men die for wealth while birds die for food." If he took all of this white silver away, right now those people wouldn't dare say much because of his prestige, but they would still bear anger in their hearts. It would leave behind quite the root for disaster, and maybe even the witch's death wouldn't be settled peacefully.

“Village Chief Li, you’re the person with the highest virtue and standing, so first tell us what we should do with this silver.” Li Qingshan wiped off the blood from the steel blade’s back, and sheathed it back into the scabbard. It sounded like he wanted Village Chief Li to make the decision, but when he said the four words “highest virtue and standing,” his tone was noticeable heavier.

“How could I how could I, this is you Second Son’s credit. You cut off this great scourge for the village, so you should handle this silver.” Village Chief had just played a disgraceful role a few days ago, and he always felt that Li Qingshan’s words carried a strong taste of intimidation, so how would he dare agree to this request.

Li Qingshan looked left and right, and those he looked at all hurriedly nodded: “Second Son you just handle it!” He then nodded. He didn’t mind splitting the silver and exchanging that for peace, but if there really was someone who couldn’t see clearly and wanted to take the lion’s share of his spoils, then they’d have to first ask the blade in his hand if it agreed or not.

In this group of people, who wasn’t much older than Li Qingshan, but no one felt indignant at listening to the arrangements of a fifteen years old young man. The present Li Qingshan wasn’t the Li Qingshan from the past; that unwavering and cruel blade that murdered someone had already awed them all.

Li Qingshan sat on the ground and partitioned the money. He held the porcelain jar filled with white bones in one hand, the other hand holding his short knife, while a group of mighty people and elder people lowered their heads as they listened to his words.

But everyone was surprised at the first person he distributed silver to.

“Uncle Wealthy, the witch ruined your household and killed your family, by reason you should have compensation. Take this silver. In the future don’t spend your life drunk, only then can you comfort the spirit of the departed.” Li Qingshan used the blade’s scabbard and poked at the silver piled into a small hill, pushing out some silver.

“How...how could I accept this!” Wealthy Li also didn’t expect Li Qingshan to say this, and he was at a loss as what to do.

“Take it away!” Li Qingshan actually wanted to praise and reward him for his courage at standing out right now and shouldering the burden for the murder.

Wealthy Li put the silver away with unspeakable gratitude.

Li Qingshan looked again at the two scoundrels: “Those are for you.” He glanced at that scoundrel lying dead on the ground: “And it’s also for him. Give him a good burial when you go back. In the future earn a honest living, don’t do those lowlife chicken stealing dog stealing things anymore, or I fear you could meet the same kind of disaster.”

The two scoundrels were both surprised and happy as they gathered the silver. When Li Qingshan had mentioned this companion of theirs, their faces were both pale white, but they

didn't look too saddened. Whether they would actually spend the money and give this companion a burial, only the heavens could know.

Finally Li Qingshan cupped his hands at Steward Liu, Village Chief Li, and the group of village elders: "In the past few days, I've greatly offended you all, this silver can be said to be an apology. I still hope you'll forgive this boy for not understanding things. However, if I still hear about old people not respecting themselves and bullying the weak with the strong in the village..." His mouth said apology, but his face didn't express the slightest regret. His voice was even sterner and harsher when he said the last few words.

Those people repeatedly said: "We won't we won't!"

Li Qingshan nodded his ascent and pushed out a pile of silver for themselves to divide.

"What about the rest of the villagers?" Village Chief Li saw that there was still a great pile left after he got his own share of the silver. Since even Wealthy Li this kind of victim could get compensation, then the village wasn't lacking in people suffering from injustice. It could be said that every family and every household had made offerings to the witch.

Li Qingshan sent him a glance: "The several of you still have objections?" Although he sympathized with the villagers, he wasn't planning on footing the bill for someone else's silliness. If it weren't for him killing the witch with a swift and decisive blade, those people could very well have tried to block him at the threats

and urges of the witch.

Moreover, how to split the silver, which family got more and which family got less, there could absolutely not be any perfect fairness. In the end he would not only not get any advantage, but instead become the object of everyone's hatred.

Village Chief Li had also seen through this point, and he wanted to trip this young man who had all this momentum with him. To speak frankly, what did the interest of the villagers have to do with him? He was merely afraid of the ever increasing threat to his authority in the village posed by this man in front of him. It could very well be that in a few years, when he became a genuinely mature adult, he wouldn't even be able to hang onto this status of village chief.

But he didn't expect that with Li Qingshan's thoughts would be so meticulous at such a young age, as if he had seen through his plot with one glance. It made him even more terrified and he didn't dare to speak any longer.

Li Qingshan wrapped up the rest of the silver: "Then I'll have to invite all of you to give an explanation to the village. If someone ran his tongue off and talked nonsense, and it fell into my ears, hmph!"

A group of people obediently promised. The blade was in front of them, and they also got benefits, who would dare speak nonsense.

Led out by Village Chief Li, they explained to the village people.

They greatly praised Li Qingshan's virtues at removing this scourge for sake of the people. At first there were some die-hard believers of the witch who couldn't accept it, but when remains were carried out one by one, everyone shut their mouths. Someone who had so many bones of the dead buried inside their backyard, could they be a good person?

Also, who wanted to offend Li Qingshan this kind of fierce and powerful man for the sake of a dead person. There was even this group of elders with "high virtue and standing."

Li Qingshan didn't appear himself. Instead he took the bronze bell from the witch's severed hand. He could vaguely feel the spirituality inside, different from ordinary tools. He asked Little An: "She was using this stuff to control you?"

Little An nodded and looked with terror at this bronze bell.

Li Qingshan held the bell and strongly twisted it, twisting the bell until it deformed. That spirituality suddenly vanished. Afterwards he went outside the door and threw away the bell with all his strength. He turned his head back and smiled: "You're free!"

Chapter 17: Dark Shade Ghost Control Technique

Little An's expression was both greatly happy and a little vacant at the same time.

Li Qingshan made another search of the witch's house. Little An followed behind him like a little sycophant. He suddenly pulled on his trouser legs and pointed to a place.

There Li Qingshan found a hidden spot in the wall. There was a stack of papers inside, all of them silver notes. He'd already vaguely heard that this world also had money presses, but it was the first time he saw genuine silver notes in his life.

The witch had probably buried the silver during the prime of her life, but then she became old and couldn't possibly go dig the soil again, so she exchanged those years' plunders into light silver notes and kept them in this hidden box. There were probably also several hundred taels. She was already so wealthy, but unexpectedly she still went head to head with him for the sake of a mere boar, then ended up dead.

In the hidden box's bottom, Li Qingshan finally found the thing he wanted to find. This was a page, and it was filled with tiny handwritten characters. At a rough glance, it was precisely the technique to refine souls and control ghosts. This page's edges were jagged and uneven, as if it had been torn off from a book.

Li Qingshan had caught his first glimpses of the road to

cultivation from the [Bull Demon Strong Fist], and he was filled with curiosity for other techniques. He didn't expect the witch's strange methods to actually come from a book page. If she had the entire book, then he would probably have kicked the bucket in this place today.

But if the witch had the whole book in hand, she probably wouldn't have holed herself in this Crouching Bull Village for half her life. The witch wasn't originally someone from the Crouching Bull Village, she had suddenly come and settled here several decades ago. No one knew her origins, and Li Qingshan also had no way to know where she obtained this book page.

However, there was still a silver note under this page, unexpectedly worth a huge thousand taels. This silver note was extremely old and yellowed. You could see at a glance it was aged and was absolutely not something she earned after coming to the Crouching Bull Village. The witch's antecedents became even more impossible to unravel.

Li Qingshan asked Little An: "Do you recognize this thing?" He felt that this might have some relation with Little An's past history.

Little An didn't say anything, not shaking nor nodding his head.

Li Qingshan knew that this exceeded the scope of what he could answer. He naturally accepted everything in this box without any reservation, but when he was about to go out, he felt again Little An tug on his trouser leg.

Li Qingshan turned his head back. He saw the kid look at him with a face full of confusion, like a child who'd lost his way, looking unspeakably pitiful. His heart became soft and he squatted down, saying in a gentle voice: "You don't have anywhere to go?"

Little An nodded. Li Qingshan said: "Then you can keep me company first!" So saying he opened the porcelain jar, knowing that the ghost didn't dare to move under the sunlight.

Little An exposed a shy smile and flew inside the porcelain jar.

Li Qingshan took the jar and went back home. He buried the porcelain jar behind the thatched house, then piled up a tiny tomb.

The green bull came back and asked: "Success?"

Li Qingshan said: "What's difficult about a trivial old witchy wench !" Then he displayed to it this time's spoils of war. He showed the bull that book page and asked: "Does this count as a supernatural technique? Can I cultivate it?"

"This broken page naturally doesn't amount to anything, but this page comes from a supernatural skill called [Dark Shade Ghost Control Technique]. I don't know how it fell into her hand. There's mostly no benefit in cultivating this kind of incomplete things. Have you never heard about not eating more than you can chew? First cultivate the Nine Bulls and Two Tiger to some success, we'll talk about the rest later!" The green bull glanced at him and immediately revealed the origin of this page.

“Then out of the [Dark Shade Ghost Control Technique] and the [Strength of Nine Bulls and Two Tigers], which one is the strongest?”

“It would have been difficult to say if it were the original version of the [Strength of Nine Bulls and Two Tigers]. Although the [Dark Shade Ghost Control Technique] doesn’t put emphasis on training the body, it can gather a great group of ghost types and submerge the enemy with numbers. It’s a good battle skill. If you can’t defeat someone who cultivates this technique in one move, it’s very easy to be drowned in a sea of ghosts.”

“Then what about the strength of demon bulls and demon tigers I’m cultivating?”

“Of course it’s much better.”

Li Qingshan calmed his mind and no longer hesitated. He put this book page away.

The rest of the spoils were merely silver and money. Li Qingshan originally believed the green bull wouldn’t care about those mortal things, but he didn’t expect the green bull to say heavily when he heard: “Very good, this is truly the most important thing compared to that broken page!”

Faced with a supernatural skill it showed contempt, but it put such heavy emphasis on silver. Although Li Qingshan had already experienced the bull’s teaching about “eating meat and drinking

wine,” he still couldn’t help be surprised. This brother bull was really profane enough.

The green bull saw what he was thinking about: “Have you never heard the four words “[Law Companion Wealth Land](#)”? Those are all indispensable conditions for cultivation. The money is even ranked first.”

Taoist saying: the four things needed for cultivation, namely a technique/law/scripture, companions to cultivate with, wealth for resources, and an environment to cultivate in.

Li Qingshan nodded: “You need financial foundations for anything.” If he didn’t have the green bull providing the most important food, he’d have no way to cultivate even if he was pregnant with miraculous scriptures: “However, it doesn’t look like there’s a lot of things I can spend money on!” This pile of more than a thousand taels of silver was a huge fortune. He could survive for a long time if he only needed to buy wine and meat to eat.

The green bull said: “You’re always asking me how long it’ll be before you can cultivate the [Bull Demon Strong Fist] into shape.”

“That’s right, but you never want to answer.”

“I can answer you now. With your current cultivation speed, without any incident I’m afraid it’d take you ten years to reach the first layer of the [Bull Demon Strong Fist] and cultivate to the strength of one bull!”

“Ten years!” Li Qingshan was stunned into opening his mouth wide.

“This is only an optimistic evaluation. If you meet with a bottleneck then it’s even more difficult to say, the more powerful the technique the more difficult it is to cultivate. Do you take daoist techniques for your peasant martial arts, like you can randomly practice it and succeed like just like that, and afterwards you’ll become unmatched under the sky? Wake up!”

It was as if someone had poured a bucket of cold water over Li Qingshan, and his joy at killing the witch was cleanly swept aside: “In that case, if I want to cultivate the [Strength of Nine Bulls and Two Tigers] to perfection, I’d need at least a hundred years?” He couldn’t imagine what he would look like in a hundred years.

“Wrong, supernatural techniques are more difficult the higher you go. It wouldn’t be surprising if you can’t succeed after three or five hundred years. But you don’t need to worry too much, every time you reach another layer, your body’s primordial essence will be reinforced and your life will naturally be extended.”

“How’s this any good!” Li Qingshan recognized that his perseverance was out of the ordinary, and he persevered every day training without interruption, but if he had to persist for several hundred years, he’d become crazy just thinking about it.

The green bull saw that its psychological attack had more or less reached its goal, and made an expression of “kid, now you know how hard it is” then said: “If you want to shorten the time, the simplest way falls on the word “Wealth.””

Not caring about Li Qingshan's expression, a list flew into Li Qingshan's hand. Several dozen kinds of herbal ingredients were written on the list: "This is?"

"It's to boil soup and make wine. Even mortals understand this trick. It doesn't matter if some ingredients are there or not, there's only one critical component that can absolute not be missing."

"Ginseng!" Li Qingshan already saw the ingredient at the top of the list.

This was probably the spiritual herb most commonly seen and easiest to obtain in the world. It was nicknamed "King of a hundred grasses" and it was able to greatly nourish the original qi. In Chinese medicine, there was a soup to wake up the dead, and when you poured it at the moment of death it could make someone recover enough to pass on his testament. In reality it was merely ginseng soup.

"It's precisely ginseng."

Chapter 18: Locust Tree And Ghost Rearing

“Then I’m not very different from ordinary martial artists?”

“Of course there are differences. Ordinary people have bodies that easily become weak and are hard to restore. If they eat too much ginseng, it will not only not be beneficial but will be harmful instead. I didn’t tell you before because your body was still too weak. Even if I told you it would have been useless.”

“Those days slowly nursed you, you also cultivated a shred of true qi, only this can be considered as meeting the requirements. I was just about to ask you to find a way to make money, now we can save some trouble. However I’m afraid this much money won’t be able to support for too long.”

Li Qingshan also understood where the difference was. He could eat more ginseng than ordinary people and didn’t have to worry about suffering from internal heat and bleeding noses. His body was like a furnace, and with the support of the supernatural skill it could refine and absorb all the essence and energy entering his body, not wasting a single bit.

This also meant that Li Qingshan had to buy many many ginsengs. And ginseng this stuff, no matter the era, was a considerably costly precious ingredient.

He had to eat ginseng like radish, so his money probably wouldn’t be enough no matter how much of it he had.

With his thousand taels of silver, how much ginseng could he buy? He couldn't refrain from considering this question!

After lamenting, Li Qingshan couldn't help but admit that this wasn't bad news. His strength progress's speed would reach a new level.

In order to make a breakthrough in their strength, ordinary people had to search for rare spiritual pills and herbs, and when they ate them they weren't even guaranteed to have any result. While he only needed to eat those common and most easily obtained things to make continuous progress in his strength. If he spread this out he had no idea how many persons would envy him, what was he still dissatisfied for.

As to genuine gold and white silver, he'd always manage to find a way. With a sufficiently powerful strength, was he still worried he couldn't make money?

"This little ghost is interesting." The green bull circled behind Li Qingshan's body and stared with its round bullseyes at Little An who was hiding behind Li Qingshan's body. From beginning to end, Little An had always been hiding behind Li Qingshan, quietly leaning out as he observed the green bull with great curiosity.

Little An became scared and hid himself on the other side. He didn't dare directly face this talking bull. Although the green bull didn't have any frightful stuff like a killing aura or an angry aura on its body, he was still almost instinctively reluctant to get close.

“You’re talking about Little An, he has no where to go. I’ll first take care of him, you won’t mind right!” Li Qingshan casually said that. If the green bull actually had reservations it naturally wouldn’t say them in front of Little An.

“With only a broken page, she actually managed to cultivate to the point of ordering ghosts, and even a ghost that can manipulate objects. This is really incredible, either that old woman was a genius in the dao of ghost refining, or else there’s something exceptional about the spiritual nature of this little ghost. However that old woman cultivated for so many years and sacrificed so many test products, but she only refined this one ghost, so it’s definitely the latter.”

Li Qingshan looked at little An. He had no idea what’s exceptional about him? But anyway a little ghost was a very strange thing to begin with.

The green bull said: “Maybe it’s your best spoil. Why aren’t you still quickly making him your slave ghost, it’ll be greatly useful to you in the future.”

“What slave ghost, he’s only a child, I already promised him to set him free.” Li Qingshan was someone who wouldn’t go against his conscience even in the most difficult of times. He didn’t sell off the green bull for travel money, and now he naturally wouldn’t do so.

The green bull felt itself that it had said too much and yawned: “That’s up to you, but it lost its master, and if there’s no one to rear it, the spiritual aura will disperse in not too much time. Then

the soul will scatter away.”

Scattered soul! Little An confusedly blinked his eyes.

“Yin ghosts aren’t poultry or livestock, they still need to be reared?”

“The dead aren’t tolerated by the living world. Even extremely strong ghosts can’t withstand a trivial exposure to sunlight. They might even disappear and die if blown away by a fierce gale. If anyone who died left a ghost behind, then after ten thousand years, the human world would have stocked up on who knows how many ghosts.”

“Then what can I do?”

At dusk, Li Qingshan walked in great strides to the mountain woods carrying an ax on his shoulder. A little ghost both real and unreal hovered back and forth around him.

Sometimes it ran far away to the river shore and watched a fish with great curiosity, and sometimes it flew to the treetops and touched a flying bird. But without waiting for Li Qingshan’s call, it came back beside Li Qingshan swift as the wind, anxiously watching him.

Li Qingshan shook his head and returned a smile. He faintly felt a little responsible for this child.

But behind his body, the flying bird stiffly dropped from the treetops while the fish floated on the water surface flipped on its belly. It was proof this wasn't an ordinary child, but a dangerous ghost.

Li Qingshan carefully searched within the forest. He finally stopped in front of a great locust tree whose trunk could only be circled around by more than ten men. He lifted his ax, wildly chopping and hacking.

Although he didn't know any ax technique, the [Bull Demon Strong Fist] contained the most basic and the most profound of operating techniques. No matter what weapon came to his hand, he could smoothly command them all.

Every chop of the ax sank with great force at the same spot.

Sawdust swirled in the air, a tremendous tree topped over.

Li Qingshan didn't pay attention to the rest and only cut out a little wooden core from the center. He handed it in front of Little An.

Little An reached his hand out and touched this small wooden core, his small face revealing an expression of pleasant comfort. Finally he altogether transformed into a burst of cool breeze and drilled inside.

Li Qingshan smiled. This was a method taught by the green bull,

to find an ancient locust tree more than a hundred years old. Locust trees had a natural effect in gathering gloomy spirits, and they were greatly beneficial to gloomy ghost types. Trying now, it was indeed the case.

This way, he didn't have to worry about Little An's soul scattering away.

Back to the thatched house, he sat on the big boulder in front of the door, and carved the wooden core into the shape of a wooden plate. After careful polishing, he engraved the character "An" on it, then he wore it on his waist. His body's inborn yang qi would slowly nourish Little An's soul.

He could also borrow the [yin qi](#) on Little An's body, and practice the manipulation of qi.

You've probably heard about Yin and Yang already. Yin and Yang are two opposites that form together the Oneness, the Dao. Yin is associated with cold, gloom, shady things, the dead, negative energy, the moon and femininity, while Yang is related to the sun, virility, positive energy, heat, life, activity, etc.

By the way, "true qi" doesn't mean that the rest is false. "True" in this case is just a Chinese qualifier to signify something is on a higher level, a more primordial level.

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Inside the small yard, Li Qingshan sat upright on the ground while his mouth shouted nonstop: "Little An, the neck!"

Little An hugged his neck. The shred of true qi inside Li Qingshan's body was stimulated by the yin qi and flowed to the neck.

“Right arm!”

Little An hurried to shift the direction and hugged his arm. Although his handsome little face was still pale white, it was filled with an innocent childish smile, as if he found this an extremely funny game.

Until the moon reached the branch tips, Li Qingshan finally stood up and Little An reluctantly pulled away.

With Little An's help, the shred of true qi inside Li Qingshan's body became a lot tamer, and Little An's eyes also became a little more alert, not as wooden as they were at first.

Li Qingshan thought that the reason wasn't only because of the nourishment from the yang qi. Even the cleverest and most quick-witted of children would probably look this wooden and inarticulate if they were to be taken away from their parent's knees, being mistreated and beaten at will.

When they recovered their freedom and life restored a little normality, the cleverness inside them would begin to sprout anew.

Little An looked hopefully at Li Qingshan. He still couldn't speak, but in his eyes was clearly written: “Let's play again!”

“Alright, this isn’t a game. Let’s stop for today, we’ll talk about it tomorrow!”

Little An obediently nodded his head. He absolutely wouldn’t act shamelessly spoiled like a normal child, but it was hard to conceal his disappointment.

Li Qingshan was the most helpless faced with this appearance: “Fine, let’s play again!”

Little An smiled shyly, but his ears immediately pricked up.

“Left leg! The back!”

Chapter 19: Bull Demon Showing Its Might

Time went by without notice, and fall came in the blink of an eye. The maple leaves in the mountains gradually turned to red, and the bright golden rice ears also filled out.

A bull cart leisurely traveled on a small road between farm fields. No one drove the green bull pulling the cart. Thick animal skin was draped inside the cart, and a young man lay on top of them. He held a rice straw in his mouth, leisurely pillowed on his arms while he gazed at the sky. At his waist a short knife was tied at one side, while a wooden plaque hung on the other. It was none other than Li Qingshan.

He carried more than a thousand taels of silver and traveled to the Cedar Creek Town more than ten miles away. In a little remote village mountain, even wanting to spend money wasn't easily accomplished.

If he wanted to buy things, he could only go to big towns or cities. Although there were a great variety of goods in Suncheer City, it was too far away, and it certainly wouldn't be cheap either.

He could only settle for the second best and go to the town. Every month at a preset time, the town would organize a large-scale market gathering, and at that time all the villagers in the surroundings would go to the town and visit the market, conducting all kinds of buying or selling. It was precisely the best opportunity to buy ginseng. Moreover, he had gathered quite a bit of animal skins and could also take the opportunity to get rid of them.

Originally Li Qingshan didn't want to let the green bull pull the cart, but the green bull didn't mind in the least to continue acting as an ordinary bull.

Sunlight had only just been released over Cedar Creek Town when he reached it. There was an endless stream of horses and carriages in the small town while men bustled back and forth. Many a small merchant promoted their goods in great voices. It was an extremely lively scene.

Li Qingshan found an empty spot and laid the animal skins on a sackcloth he prepared beforehand. He didn't imitate the others in yelling but merely sat on the side in meditation. He didn't waste the slightest opportunity to cultivate.

Inside his body, that weak shred of qi flow already became a little more robust. He was like a child who only wanted to play and kept urging the shred of true qi to flow all around inside his body.

Although he didn't move, doing such was also extremely taxing on the mind and spirit. Li Qingshan often opened his eyes and answered the customers who came to inquire about prices.

He had a huge amount of money and wasn't counting on those animal skins to make a fortune. He only wanted to sell them and get rid of them as fast as possible and buy a lot of ginseng, so the prices he'd set were extremely cheap.

So although he refused to bargain, his business was still

excellent. Winter was coming. Li Qingshan was someone who'd suffered through the pain of winter wind biting into his bones. Who among the common folk didn't want to make a leather coat or a pair of leather boots, and in not much time a big group gathered around him.

“Out of the way, out of the way!” Several young people carrying bows and hunting knives split the crowd with unkind faces. They circled around the little stall, the shadows of their heads falling on Li Qingshan's body.

Li Qingshan opened his eyes: “What brings all of you here?” His present vision was already very different than in the past, and he could see at a glance that those people weren't good to deal with.

Although they were all young and didn't have any especially fierce or vicious expression, their bodies carried a vigorous killing aura. If Baldy Liu could have been said to be a randomly barking balding dog, then they would be violent mountain guard dogs. Any one between them could easily cut off Baldy Liu.

A sharp-looking young man with a short stature and a small beard inquired: “Where did you get those beast skins?”

His companions hovered their hands over the skins and discovered that they were like the rumors said. Those beast skins had no arrow holes on them, or any kind of trace of damage. They were all of first-class quality, but the price they sold at was even cheaper than ordinary skins.

“Buy it if you want to buy, go away if you’re not buying, don’t block the sunlight.” Li Qingshan was too lazy to make up some excuse and explain to some strangers, and he closed his eyes to cultivate.

The people around had already moved away a little, but they didn’t leave. On the contrary, there were more and more people crowding around. Their various discussion all clearly fell into his ears.

“Aren’t they hunters from Horse Rein Village?” “He actually dares to disregard people from Horse Rein Village, I don’t know how many lives he’s got?”

“Horse Rein Village!” Li Qingshan’s heart flashed. Although he was ignorant and inexperienced, this place was still like thunder in his ears. This was one of the villages surrounding Cedar Creek Town, sitting very deep inside the hundred thousand mountains. Those who lived there were all hunters and born hunters for many generations, so it was no wonder they carried this kind of temperament with them.

Compared with Crouching Bull Village this kind of village that mainly relied on agriculture, Horse Rein Village had much swifter and fiercer customs. They fought everyday with the wild beasts in the mountains, and they also practiced some martial arts handed down from generation to generation. They never agreed to abide by Suncheer City’s rules, not even talking about paying taxes.

Some people in Suncheer City had once tried to send troops on a punitive expedition there, but before even reaching the village,

they encountered countless traps and hidden arrows. They rushed to the village with great difficulty, having lost half their men and horses. The great army's moral was at the bottom, and the general leading the troops merely reined his horse in front of the village and dejectedly fled back to Suncheer City.

Since then people forgot the village's original name and changed it to "Horse Rein Village."

It was obvious to imagine what kind of pride and arrogance the villagers had, living in a village who could make a great punitive army return back with its tail between its legs,. For a young man not yet an adult to contend against them was like striking stones with an egg.

The short-statured young man said full of anger: "You can't sell those skins here!"

"Based on what?" Li Qingshan opened his eyes, a flash seeming to pass in his eyes.

It made the young man think of the glowing light in the mountain's wild beasts' eyes inside the darkness, and he instantly became vigilant. But he wasn't afraid. They were hunters who fought and killed wild beasts, and looking at the peasant attire on Li Qingshan he became even more disdainful: "Based on this daddy not letting you sell!" So saying he reached his hands to tear off Li Qingshan's stall.

A coarse big hand grabbed this young man's hand like an iron

lock. There was unexpectedly some stabbing pain.

The young man was surprised: “This guy is really strong.” But his reaction wasn’t slow in the least, and his left fist directly fired at Li Qingshan’s face.

His companions didn’t have any notion of lending a hand. They merely watched on the side with a detached air, seeming extremely confident. Some even carried a disdainful smile on their face.

To be honest, this was the first time Li Qingshan genuinely fought hand to hand with someone. Baldy Liu in all his drunkenness didn’t have the slightest strength to resist, while the witch was even bitten back by the ghost haze.

The fist broke the air and came very fast, not giving any time for reflection. But those many days of training had born results. Li Qingshan subconsciously slanted his head and avoided the blow. His right foot stamped on the ground and his body leaned forward.

With the spine as the center, every muscle in his body shook and combined into one whole. He fired off a [shoulder strike](#), and heavily knocked against that young man with a powerful force.

铁山靠 in the original text, literally “Lean of the Iron Mountain.” It’s a shoulder strike move of the bajiquan, a Chinese martial art.

The shoulder strike was a very common style among fist techniques. The [Bull Demon Strong Fist] also had such a move that merged its three main styles at the same time.

Bull Demon Ground Stamp, set the heel firmly down and gather strength from the ground. Bull Demon Skin Shift, make the body tough and tenacious, unmovable and unshakable. Bull Demon Horn Gore, use the body as bull horns and ram out. The three moves were all executed smoothly.

The green bull crouched behind and nodded in satisfaction.

The young man turned pale with fright. It was like a raging bull coming to ram him, and with a pain in his chest he flew out from the bump, landing inside the crowd. It felt as if his whole body's muscles and bones were about to scatter apart.

The discussion voices of the surrounding people came to an abrupt end. The young man's companions also stared blankly, then furiously charged over.

Li Qingshan's expression became all the more cautious. One versus one and one versus many were two entirely different things. Except if the difference in strength was too great, it was difficult to contend with a crowd with a mere pair of fists. When a sturdy bull was surrounded by a group of vengeful hunting dogs, it could only end up with its flesh torn apart piece by piece until it died.

At this critical moment of danger, the shred of true qi livened up and flowed to Li Qingshan's eyes that were exerting all of their focus. He only felt their movements suddenly slow down, slowed to a point where even the furious expression on their faces could be

clearly distinguished.

Chapter 20: First Show Of Fame

This was probably not just the power from the shred of qi, but even more so a wonderful effect from the green bull's tears.

He lowered his body and flashed past a punch. The Bull Demon Horn Gored, two fists flew out, and he knocked down another young hunter.

But at the same time, a hunter had already circled behind him, and violently punched at the middle of Li Qingshan's back, while the other two hunters clung to Li Qingshan's waist one from the left and one from the right, fiercely trying to tackle him to the ground.

They hunted all day in the mountains and they were proficient in encircling the enemy. They were absolutely no street-fighting boors. Even if Li Qingshan could defeat any one among them, he could only fall downwind at this moment.

Seeing that he had no time to block, Li Qingshan's mind entirely focused on the middle of his back, and the shred of true qi followed his thoughts to also flow there. The muscles of his back fiercely bunched together, faintly swelling up.

A heavy heavy fist hit Li Qingshan's back, but it was like it hit the tough hide of a bull, and all of its strength was absorbed and disintegrated by the bunch of muscles. Except from a shudder, Li Qingshan's body suffered no other effect.

At the same time, the two hunters who were hugging Li Qingshan's waist felt as if Li Qingshan's body had taken roots on the ground, and they had absolutely no way of moving it. The three men had used up their strength, and their vigor suddenly weakened.

In the meantime, Li Qingshan who had endured three layers of attacks had already regained his breath, and with an explosive shout, his two elbows fell down.

With the Bull Demon Horn Gore of the [Bull Demon Strong Fist], apart from the fists and feet, every part of the body could become bull horns, and even more so for the elbows that were the mightiest of bull horns.

Two hunters only felt pain in the center of their backs and felt the urge to puke blood. They couldn't stop their bodies from dropping flat on the ground.

Li Qingshan fiercely turned around and pounced on the hunter who had sneak attacked him behind his back. With a fist on his chest, he hit him down on the ground.

The crowd watching around was bedazzled. They witnessed the young man seemingly in a vulnerable spot quickly and efficiently knock down five valiant and burly men from the Horse Rein Village, and they were all indescribably flabbergast.

Li Qingshan watched the five hunters groan in pain on the ground, then looked at his own two hands, seemingly not daring to

imagine this was something he did. Without him being aware of it, his strength had already reached such a level.

But he didn't have time yet to be happy that a large group of hunters charged forward, pulling their bows and drawing their hunting knives, circling Li Qingshan and glaring at him like tigers watching their preys.

The Horse Rein Village hadn't sent only a few persons to the Cedar Creek Town's market this time, but a full twenty persons. They had carried with them the beast skins accumulated by the whole village. The few young hunters just now were just younger generations following their elder generations to broaden their outlook.

They had trouble selling their own stuff and heard there was someone selling cheap animal skins, so they charged out together to bring bad luck to Li Qingshan. But they didn't expect that they couldn't find Li Qingshan's bad luck and were taught a lesson instead.

The adults naturally wouldn't sit there idle and not do anything. They reacted quickly, surrounding Li Qingshan. Those more than a dozen of pulled bows, the explosion of their auras, all of this made him feel like a cornered beast who fell into a hunting trap, the fate of his life or death taken out of his hands. It even gave birth to a sensation of despair.

In comparison, the “[Feast at Hong Gate](#)” at Steward Liu's house couldn't have been more ordinary. His state of mind was stretched taunt just like the bowstrings. All of a sudden, he realized the

opposite party's status. Those were men who made a living out of hunting, and their expertise didn't lie in fighting with the fist, but with the bows in their hands. His Bull Demon Skin Refining could resist punches but it could never resist sharp arrows.

A famous cultural reference in China, a feast organized by Xiang Yu to entertain Liu Bang. Those two were the two biggest rivals for the reunification of China during the Chu-Han contention. Xiang Yu and especially his adviser Fan Zeng plotted to have Liu Bang killed at the feast, but Liu Bang managed to escape in the end. He went on to defeat Xiang Yu. He became emperor of China and founded the Han dynasty that lasted around 400 years and ended with the era of the Three Kingdoms.

At this critical moment, he coldly drew the thick backed steel blade from his waist. His vision searched all around, looking for a plan of escape. He never expected that selling animal skins would also provoke such a disaster. Although he would rather not, he might well have to kill people in this downtown area and forge out a bloody path out.

“You're the one who did it?” A man in the prime of his years with a sickly face and a great bow on his back stood among the hunters, while asking in a voice resembling a great bell.

Li Qingshan smiled: “I did it!”

The man closely examined Li Qingshan with some surprise. An ordinary person would be scared into soft hands and feet faced with such a scene, while this kid was young but surprisingly so calm. Simply this state of mind was already far above any younger generation of his village.

He asked the short hunter that had been sent flying out by Li Qingshan's shoulder strike: "Little Black, what's this thing about?"

"Chief hunter, I reckon this kid is ruining our business on purpose!" Little Black forced his body to stand up.

The crowd was in an uproar: "Isn't that the chief hunter of Horse Rein Village?" "It's Sick Yellow Tiger!"

The so called chief hunter was equivalent to a village chief, but his power was different from the likes of the old people in the Crouching Bull Village. Those who could become chief hunters in Horse Rein Village were all the strongest of heroes and they commanded all matters concerning hunting in the village.

This Sick Yellow Tiger was the present chief hunter of Horse Rein Village. He was a famous and celebrated character. Li Qingshan had also heard of his renown since a long time ago, but he didn't expect him to be the sick-looking man in front of him. He finally understood where the "Sick Tiger" words came from.

Men's renown were a powerful influence, and Li Qingshan naturally felt a heavy pressure in his heart. But he already wasn't the Li Qingshan from the past, so he laughed coldly: "You didn't say two words and came to tear off my stall, now you spit venomous slanders on me, overturning it into me ruining your business. The Horse Rein Village is indeed really overbearing."

Sick Yellow Tiger's face sank down as he shouted: "You're still

not quickly crawling up? A group of men can't even win against a single person, you even have the face to crawl on the ground and shout in pain, do you still deserve to be called men of Horse Rein Village?"

Li Qingshan knew that those few strikes of his weren't light, but once Sick Yellow Tiger issued the command, those five young hunters unexpectedly supported themselves and stood up. In addition to the robustness of their bodies, it was even more due to their deep reverence for Sick Yellow Tiger.

Sick Yellow Tiger lifted his hand and all the hunters took back their knives and bows: "This this was our fault first, but kid you shouldn't have used such a heavy hand either!"

"If I didn't use a heavy hand, the one lying on the ground here right now would be me."

"We rarely come down from the mountains to come sell our furs and clothes. The whole village's rice, salt and everyday necessities all rely on it. It wouldn't matter if you sold at market price, but this way of selling disrupts the pricing, it's of great harm to us."

Li Qingshan fell silent, this wasn't something he had expected at first. Of course he could say that it was his own business how he wanted to sell. But a man with Sick Yellow Tiger's reputation acknowledged his own faults in front of everyone, discussing calmly and reasonably with him, not oppressing him with the power of numbers. So he didn't want to waggle his tongue and argue, making an endless annoyance of himself.

If the other side had truly wanted to fight and kill, he wouldn't have sat and waited for death either.

Sick Yellow Tiger said: "I'll buy all of those skins!" So saying some hunters came forward to pay the money and take the skins away.

The surrounding people all acclaimed Sick Yellow Tiger's uprightness with clucks of their tongues. Li Qingshan was a little surprised. He looked at the bags of money handed in front of him: "No need!" He turned around and packed the bull cart. He wasn't planning to rely on those animal skins to eat to begin with, and since the other party was being so forthright, others would despise him if he haggled over small amounts of silver.

The admiration in Sick Yellow Tiger's eyes became even heavier. As he watched Li Qingshan disappear in the sea of men, he told the people beside him: "I took a fancy to this kid, does anyone know where he comes from?"

A farmer cautiously said: "It looks like it was the Crouching Bull Village's Li the Second!"

Many people around heard, and they all said: "No wonder!"

Although the roads were difficult of access between the villages, those stories that carried the flavor of legendary sagas would always spread very fast. Li Qingshan didn't know that in the surrounding areas, he had already acquired a little fame.

Chapter 21: Buying Ginseng And Ambush

Li Qingshan came to the town's best wine shop. He bought more than ten jars of good alcohol and filled the cart with them, then following the green bull's list he bought most of the ingredients from medicine shops. But the most important of all, the ginseng, couldn't be bought in herb stores.

Inside the biggest inn of Cedar Creek Town, a group of men wearing bamboo hats and carrying herb baskets were silently drinking tea. Even inside the hotel, they refused to remove the hat on their heads or the baskets on their backs.

Now and then a shopkeeper from a great herbal store came into the inn. They would open the baskets and look at what was inside, then they would bargain with them, hands inside their sleeves. If the bargaining were to be successful they would take a bag of ginseng big and small from the baskets.

Those were ginseng gatherers of the Ginseng King Village. Just like Horse Rein Village they were settled deep inside the mountains, but they primarily made their living from picking mountain ginseng. If you wanted to buy ginseng, then it was naturally cheapest to buy from them.

Li Qingshan parked the cart in front of the inn. He looked around and walked in great strides to the corner and told the ginseng gatherers: "I want to buy ginseng!"

The ginseng gatherers noticed he was very young and dressed in

broken clothes. They all exposed a contemptuous look and no one actually answered him.

Li Qingshan frowned. He took out the silver notes he had left totaling over a thousand taels and put them on the table: “I want to buy ginseng!”

This time every ginseng gatherer lifted their heads, exposing a stupefied expression. They didn’t expect Li Qingshan to actually be able to get out so much silver. They looked at each other, then finally someone said: “How much do you want to buy?”

Li Qingshan had already informed himself about the pricing of ginseng. He reached an agreement with them and left with a big bag of ginseng.

The ginseng gatherers whispered in low voices: “Should we do this kid in?”

“It’s more important to find the spiritual ginseng, that’s a treasure worth thousands of gold. Mortals can extend their longevity when they eat it. If a martial artist eats it, he can immediately become a first-class master. It’s even not impossible to break through obstacles and rank up to [innate level](#).”

Originally Xiantian. You might have seen this term in other Chinese fantasy novels. It is a taoist concept, literally meaning something like “natural, inborn.” The idea here is that being close to nature is being close to the origin and hence close to the dao. Although like daoism in general it’s as mystical and vague as possible, so it can be argued one way or another.

“The spiritual ginseng is good, but there’s only one of it. We still have to face that sick ghost from Horse Rein Village. I admit myself I don’t have the good fortune to obtain it. A hundred birds in the forest aren’t as good as a single bird in your hand. Those who are willing to do this, come with me.”

Seven or eight persons stood up. They grabbed their [waist saber](#) at their waists and wandered away.

A weapon made to be worn at the waist, single edged and curved, around 3 feet long, it’s usually thinner than the dao with a shorter handle.

Not far from the door outside, a man was hidden behind a column. He quietly left after seeing this scene.

Li Qingshan drove the bull cart, traveling by his lone self on the mountain path, idly chatting with the green bull. Little An also stuck his head out from the locust tree plaque and sat on the cart’s ridge, listening to them talk.

When they came to a narrow mountain ravine, the green bull suddenly stopped its steps and turned its head back to look at Li Qingshan: “Your troubles are coming.”

As soon as its voice fell, seven or eight silhouettes appeared from the two extremities of the ravine.

Li Qingshan relied on his eyesight: “You are... people from the

Ginseng King Village?”

This group of people held waist sabers in their hands, obviously ready to murder and snatch his properties.

“I still underestimated the fiendishness of human hearts!” He could only sigh with emotion in his heart. He understood that one didn’t expose one’s wealth, so after buying the ginseng he had immediately driven the cart off to return back to the village, not staying for another night. But he didn’t imagine that this group of people would be so bold, actually daring to kill him in broad daylight.

Rumors said that those people who daily climbed steep cliffs to gather ginseng and spiritual herbs were extremely intrepid, and they were all pregnant with martial arts. Their bodies were light as birds and nimble as monkeys.

“Kid, we have some words to discuss with you!” The leader said calmly, his eyes reveling the a faint contempt, as if he was looking at a cow or sheep waiting to be killed in its cage: “Leave everything behind and you can leave.”

This kind of calm wasn’t pretense. They wandered all year long inside the mountains, and when they met lone travelers, they’d kill them in one blade and take away their possessions. It was merely a common occurrence, and when those things were done it was of impossible to leave a living witness behind.

The ginseng gatherers all snickered and came forward to encircle

him.

Seeing the crisis draw near, Li Qingshan suddenly shook the reins. The green bull gave him a look, but it actually cooperated, and drew the bull cart along as it charged forward.

“Since you refuse to drink a toast you’ll have to drink bitter wine!” The ginseng gatherers shouted curses and hurriedly scattered to both sides. Two beams of saber lights flew up from their hands, cross-slashing at Li Qingshan who was sitting on the cart.

The green bull’s bullhead swung, and its one bullhorn left drew out a strange curve. The leader of the ginseng gatherers saw the horn stab at him, but he surprisingly couldn’t dodge and was cruelly ran through the stomach, nailed dead to the mountain wall.

This ginseng picker still had his eyes wide open as fresh blood gushed out from his mouth. He couldn’t believe that with his martial arts he’d die under a plowing bull’s horn.

At the same time, Li Qingshan rolled down and landed on the ground, dodging past two flashing sabers as he put his hand on the the thick-backed blade.

The green bull freed out his angled bull horn and thought: “From the angle of a bull, this should be a super level display already. The rest will depend on yourself.”

The ginseng pickers cried in alarm: “Big brother Geng!” This “big brother Geng” was the one with the best skills among them, and they didn’t expect he’d die in such a bizzare way. They couldn’t possibly imagine the green bull was actually a spirit monster.

They cruelly said to Li Qingshan: “Kid, do you know what you’ve done? We originally wanted to let you die a painless death, but now you can just wait until we cut off your flesh piece by piece and feed it to the wolves!”

Li Qingshan sneered: “Merely counting on you!” But his face was incomparably grave as he slowly pulled out the blade.

He hadn’t expected that he’d encounter two battles in a single day, one more dangerous than the last.

It was indeed that when one obtained some martial skills, one also attracted trouble so much more easily. If he were only a farm boy without the strength to truss up a chicken, he would naturally not butt heads with the Horse Rein villagers, nor would he have had so much money to buy ginseng with.

This was the most dangerous battle he’d ever met since he was born. Although he possessed a supernatural skill, he didn’t dare say he could walk unopposed everywhere as if treading on flat land. The green bull’s words still floated in his ears.

Thoughts revolved in the blink of an eye, and a great war was about to happen at any moment.

“Die!”

A strong gale rose and four waist sabers wove a saber net that covered toward Li Qingshan. The Bull Demon Skin Refining could definitely not block this kind of saber edges. Li Qingshan made a quick assessment of the situation. He didn't even look behind him and instead went forward in great strides, pouncing on the three ginseng gatherers in front of him. His heart wasn't entirely on the present battle to the death, but he kept reminiscing about the green bull's horn gore right then.

The green bull would definitely not help him meet his enemies, otherwise with its strength, killing this group of ginseng gatherers would be as easy as flipping a hand. But there was a very deep meaning inside that horn.

In this crisis of life and death, his intelligence and comprehension were all forcibly squeezed out. His eyes suddenly flashed bright. The Bull Demon Horn Gore was about using every part of the body as bull horns. Weapons were merely extensions of the body.

The thick-backed steel blade in his hand seemed to suddenly possess spirituality and bypassed a parrying waist saber.

Amidst sounds of “puff puff,” a haze of blood filling the sky suddenly sprinkled from a ginseng gatherer's neck, and he fell to the ground.

“Old Cheng!” “This kid knows martial arts!” With a series of

curses, the gatherers looked at Li Qingshan, no longer looking as easygoing as just before.

Li Qingshan's two arms also obtained two bruises. It wasn't split by the cuts thanks to the toughness of the Bull Demon Skin Refining. Instead it aroused the fierceness in his heart, and it seemed his eyes were burning: "Come then!"

In a lush forest on the side of the mountain ravine, a group of people were hidden. They were separated only by hundred feet or so between them, but under this bright daylight, no one inside the ravine had discovered them.

Only the green bull had taken a glance in that direction.

Their leader was precisely Sick Yellow Tiger, who said with a smile to someone beside him: "Little Black, are you convinced now?"

Chapter 22: The Mystery Of The Spirit Ginseng

At this moment Li Qingshan's steel blade had taken another man's life. Although he had also taken a saber strike on his back, it hadn't cut deep in his flesh. Moreover the wound contracted and didn't let out much blood.

At the same moment, a waist saber pierced with an oblique angle at his belly. He clutched the saber's edge tightly, then his hand lifted the blade and cut off a head filled with horror in one slash.

This kind of aggressive aura made people intimidated when they saw it.

Little Black wasn't very convinced originally, only saying that the reason Li Qingshan beat them was merely because he had mounted a sudden sneak attack on them. He was set on finding an occasion to return the favor, but at this moment cold sweat emerged on his forehead. Li Qingshan's blade technique was exquisite and his slaughtering was vicious, making him alarmed.

This kind of wild beast wasn't something a half-baked hunter like him could kill. It was fortunate that they hadn't genuinely faced Li Qingshan with blades drawn earlier in the downtown area.

In a short period of time, seven men fell as corpses. Li Qingshan rested on the ground on one knee, supporting himself on an utterly broken steel blade. There were more than ten wounds on his body, and his clothes were dyed through and through by fresh blood.

Some was from other people, some was his own.

The only ginseng gatherer left had a terrified and deranged look on his face. He'd often done things like killing people to rob their belongings, but it had always been bullying honest people. When had he seen this kind of desperate killing in all of his life: "You... you madman!"

Li Qingshan's expression was like a hardened limestone. In this fight for life and death, every one of his styles and moves displayed a level exceeding his usual, stimulating the potential inside his body. But this way was also very exhausting for the body, and in a short moment he was spent.

Is this originally the dao I chose? It's really filled with bloodstains!

The green bull stood leisurely at one said, as if asking him: Are you regretting now?

"I'll kill you!" The ginseng gatherer roared crazily and charged on.

His body had no strength left. The edge of a saber fell on his neck, and the chilliness of it aroused the fine hair on his body to stand up straight. Li Qingshan madly roared "I have no regrets!" All the breath and energy in his body flowed to his hands. He clenched the steel blade tight and brandished it up to meet the enemy.

“Beng” “Sou!” A bowstring tore the air, a feather arrow shot out, nailing the last of the ginseng gatherers on the ground, dead.

Li Qingshan raised his head stunned. Several vigorous silhouettes slipped down from the mountain wall. They were precisely the Horse Rein Village’s hunters. They approached Li Qingshan cautiously, then suddenly rushed forward and grabbed his four limbs.

Li Qingshan had exhausted all the energy in his body in the moment just now. They carried him on top of the ravine.

“Kid, you did well!” Sick Yellow Tiger put away his big bow. After this praise he didn’t continue to talk. He waved his hand, and the hunters once again concealed themselves on both sides of the ravine.

In not too much of a time, the other ginseng gatherers had chased to this place. They examined the corpses of their companions with dignified faces. When they saw the gatherer nailed dead on the ground, their faces suddenly changed greatly, shouting: “Quickly escape!”

“Release!” Sick Yellow Tiger yelled his order, and a rain of arrows fell from both sides.

The ginseng gatherers suddenly waved their waist sabers. But how could they block arrows without a great difference in their martial arts. Blood curling screams echoed one after another.

Sick Yellow Tiger held his great bow, standing on a great protruding boulder, and targeted the ginseng gatherers attempting to flee. In the sea of arrows, none missed their marks, as if he were a god of death.

Li Qingshan propped his body up and watched, feeling also shocked. On one side he was shocked at how easily this battle to the bitter death between two great villages had come, and on the other side was shock at the power of bows and arrows.

He cultivated the [Bull Demon Strong Fist], and what grew fastest was precisely his strength. If he could pull a great bow, could he also kill people as if slaughtering dogs like this?

When Sick Yellow Tiger fired his fifth arrow, the miserable shrieks had already stopped, and there was only the elusive sounds of weak groans that came and went.

“Sick Yellow Tiger!” A ginseng gatherer that had his thigh pierced by an arrow issued a shrill roar.

“I’m right here!” Sick Yellow Tiger leaped down from the tall cliff and asked: “Where’s the spirit ginseng? If you say it out cleanly, I’ll give you a clean death!”

“How...how could you know?”

“The things going on around the hundred thousand mountains, I still know a little about them. The spirit ginseng appeared in the

vicinity of the Horse Rein Village's mountain. When you take it it can eliminate a hundred diseases and prolong your life, isn't that right? Before I thought it was false, but now looking at your expression I believe it a little. You really overestimate your abilities a little too much if you're thinking about snatching it from the tiger's mouth."

"You want to use the spirit ginseng to cure your disease, but it's mere wishful thinking. You have absolutely no idea how to capture the spirit ginseng. You just wait, the Ginseng King Village won't take things lying down."

"You want to contend with Horse Rein Village with only your disunified village?"

"Heh heh heh heh, when the news spreads out, I don't now how many strong masters will hurry to converge to Horse Rein Village."

Sick Yellow Tiger's face changed slightly: "Will you bear to?" He waved his hand as he saw that he couldn't obtain much information. Hunters came up one by one, filling the gatherer that still wasn't dead with their blades. Then they collected his belongings, lifted the body and threw it down in the ravine.

In the blink of an eye, the ground filled with corpses was cleanly tidied up. Only the remnant of blood was witness to the desperate battle right now. By the time the next mountain rain fell, nothing would be left anymore.

A man's life, at certain moments, was really as light and cheap as crickets or moles.

The hunters' gazes fell once more on Li Qingshan. Appreciation and admiration existed inside, but even more so there was a barely concealed murderous aura.

Li Qingshan had heard a big secret, and the people of Horse Rein Village would definitely not let him leave. The simplest way was naturally to kill him and throw him down down the ravine after the ginseng gatherers.

The hateful green bull refused to help, no matter he hovered at the edge of death. This time going out of the mountains, he had already understood that his own strength had greatly changed, and he also recognized how small and weak he still was. Perhaps this was precisely where the green bull's goal lay.

Sick Yellow Tiger said: "Is little brother willing to follow me and come sit in our Horse Rein Village?"

"What if I said I don't want to?"

"You don't appreciate kindness!" "Kill him!" The hunters were greatly angry.

Sick Yellow Tiger waved his hand and said: "I don't kill innocent people. If you're not willing, then just leave by yourself! I trust you're not someone to open his mouth and waggle his tongue."

Li Qingshan wasn't someone so unreasonable. Based on the other party's formidable demeanor, he wouldn't have a soft hand when it came to killing people. He might not kill himself, but his subordinate hunters all looked ferocious and murderous.

Moreover, he himself also had some interest in taking a look at Horse Rein Village. Maybe he could learn some hunter archery. Then he would be able to survive independently without needing the green bull's help, and his own power might also greatly increase. As to the spirit ginseng, he didn't dare think too much about it.

"Then I will, if you insist."

Sick Yellow Tiger showed his smile and ordered someone to bring ointments. When they smeared it on Li Qingshan, they found out that his wounds had contracted and hadn't continued to bleed. They clucked their tongues in wonder.

Li Qingshan resisted his pain and went to the bull cart. He took out the newly-bought ginseng, put some in his mouth and chewed slowly. He also swatted off a wine jar's seal and poured himself a bellyful of wine in big gulps.

The wine infused the ginseng and a gust of warm energy diffused from his belly. He felt immediately reinvigorated, making the crowd endlessly astonished.

Li Qingshan climbed on the bull cart and ignored the others

around him. He closed his eyes in meditation, restoring the exhaustion and pain that still lingered inside his body. He wanted to take this opportunity to sum up this battle's successes and failures.

First of all, he couldn't leave things to luck again. He'd always heard people say that the [martial world](#) was vicious and sinister. Today could count as the first time he experienced this himself. One careless step could possibly cost him his life. A man's life in this world was really too light and cheap. He couldn't possibly always obtain assistance from others every time, and he couldn't depend on impromptu outbursts from himself either. To be brave but lack planning was to seek the road to one's own death. He had better treasure this fortunate life of his instead.

Jiang Hu in the original text, literally rivers and lakes. Also called Wulin (Martial forests) it's a term from classic wuxia novels indicating the world martial artists live in. In those novels martial artists mainly interact with each others, with their own rules, structures, upholding justice by themselves with little contact and little interference from the mundane world.

But this time, amidst the struggle for life and death, his comprehension of the [Bull Demon Strong Fist] had deepened yet another level, and even his whole body's essence and energy became a little different, like a treasure blade that had been polished on a grindstone.

Chapter 23: The Martial World's Distant Roads

Following the warm current diffusing inside his abdomen, the shred of qi also livened up and flowed to his body's open wounds. An itchy numb sensation came to him.

Sick Yellow Tiger sent out a few skilled and nimble hunters as scouts, and the group of people surrounded the bull cart as they rushed toward the depths of the great mountains.

This journey took them all the way to nightfall, sinking deep inside the tall mountains, no trace of human habitations all around them.

At the foot of a mountain, Li Qingshan saw the Horse Rein Village from the legends.

A tall wooden wall was tied together all around the village, with watchtowers at the four corners. It didn't look like a village but more like a military camp. The sluice gate opened after the group neared and transmitted words. It was entirely different from Crouching Bull Village's casualness.

Li Qingshan attracted everyone's attention as the only outsider. He didn't bat an eye outwardly, but he was tense inside. This was the dragon pond and tiger cave from the legends that had made a great army rein in their horses.

Sick Yellow Tiger didn't look like he had any evil intention, but he still needed to proceed with caution, else he might lose his life muddleheadedly. That thick-backed steel blade had already been taken away, but even if it were still there, it was already so broken that it couldn't be of use anymore after that battle.

Sick Yellow Tiger settled him inside an unoccupied small courtyard. Although he didn't dispatch anyone to keep an eye on him, he exhorted Li Qingshan not to randomly walk around, before leaving hurriedly.

In the village's most central building, under the light shining from several lanterns, the hunters with the most prestige in Horse Rein Village were discussing around a round table:

“The Ginseng King Village has had grievances with us since a long time ago because of the matter of ginseng picking. We often lose people in the mountains for inexplicable reasons, I fear it's precisely their doings. This time they even dare to have ideas about the spirit ginseng, it's the right opportunity to send them a blade.”

The two villages were separated by merely a few mountains with no clear boundaries between them. The ginseng gatherers made a living from picking the ginseng, while the hunters wandered through the mountains all year long, so they could still recognize ginseng and would naturally not leave it behind if they saw some.

Hence it gave birth to many disputes. The mountain folk's disputes were often settled with a knife. It was only because the distance was far enough that no large-scale confrontation had happened yet.

Until not very long ago, between the two villages, on the Old White Peak near the Horse Rein Village, the two enemies met face to face again, and they discovered a spirit ginseng from the legends. It had already taken human shape and could even leave the soil and walk away.

This kind of rare heavenly treasure led to close-quarter fighting, but after the massacre the spirit ginseng was already gone without leaving trace or shadow. Even so, reasonably speaking it should still be on Old White Peak. No one from the two villages dared to act rashly and conduct a large-scale search on the mountain, but both sides were making their preparations.

“Chief Hunter, this thing can absolutely not be leaked out, it’s better to take care of that kid!”

“That kid’s talent is pretty good and his character also suits my tastes, it’d be a pity to kill him. I want to make him stay in the village, and add another blade for us.”

“But he’s an outsider when all’s said and done.”

“No need to say any further, I will carefully test him. If he’s not qualified enough, a certain Yellow will certainly not show a soft hand.” Sick Yellow Tiger said resolutely and decisively, but it was followed by a burst of coughs.

Inside a small pitch-dark room, Little An drilled out from the locust wood plaque and looked with concern at Li Qingshan,

reaching his hand out and touching the wounds that had already scabbed on his body.

Li Qingshan said: “Don’t worry, I’m fine, I’m fine for now!” Though he could see that Sick Yellow Tiger appreciated him, this feeling of not having his life in his own hands was really uncomfortable. If he wanted to pull his fate back into his hands, the only way was to become stronger.

He immediately followed the green bull’s instructions and soaked the ginseng with good wine to make medicinal wine. Then he stopped for a moment and looked at the result with a burst of happy gratification.

Early morning the next day, Li Qingshan woke up very early and practiced the [Bull Demon Strong Fist], but he suddenly felt a strong wind assault him from behind, as if a violent tiger was pouncing on him.

Li Qingshan turned around and sent out a punch, but it fell into empty air. Sick Yellow Tiger rubbed his arm, his right hand grasping empty air as if it were a claw that clawed toward his throat.

“He wants to kill me and shut me up?!” Li Qingshan’s thoughts revolved in his mind. He surprisingly didn’t try to dodge or block but welcomed it instead, as if he was going to deliver himself to the other party’s hand. At the same time he gathered his arms like an old bear hugging a tree, exerting the strength from his entire body.

What he cultivated was a supernatural skill based on strength, not an ordinary martial art. Although he hadn't trained to the strength of a bull yet, the power of his hug wasn't something a body of flesh and blood could bear either.

Sick Yellow Tiger suddenly pulled his claws back, withdrew his body and circled around to his back.

Li Qingshan immediately said "not good," and was just about to change his posture, but he sensed that Sick Yellow Tiger wasn't moving anymore, merely watching him with approval.

If he had pulled his body back right now, this claw would have smoothly manifested all of its power, certainly tearing his throat apart with ease. But he didn't retreat and advanced instead. This had contained the power of that move, while he used a trick born from struggles of life and death. Not only he could act according to the situation, he was also considerably brave.

"It's my loss." Li Qingshan rubbed his neck. On it were five traces of bloodstains. Sick Yellow Tiger's skills were truly outstanding. Even if he wasn't injured, he was definitely not his match.

"Where did you learn your martial arts?" Sick Yellow Tiger asked. Apart from his courage and adaptability, Li Qingshan's martial art was also very out of the ordinary. Usually, no matter how fast the reaction they still couldn't regain their breath in time. Also, just now when his five fingers touched Li Qingshan's nape it was as if they were stabbing the tenacious hide of a bull, and not a soft vital spot.

Li Qingshan naturally couldn't say that it was a bull who taught him, or else he'd probably be seen as a lunatic, so he directly said that several years ago he met a person of high skill. This man saw his simple and honest nature, then taught him a few moves, but he'd exhorted him not to divulge his identity or appearance.

"A few years ago?!" Sick Yellow Tiger was stupefied. Li Qingshan not wanting to say his teacher's identity didn't make him too surprised, but he originally thought that Li Qingshan had practiced martial skills since his childhood. The most important reason to make him stay in Horse Rein Village was to find out who is master was.

"What?" Li Qingshan was a little confused.

"You didn't practice martial arts since childhood?"

"In a trivial few years, he taught you to such a level. It's really hard to imagine, it looks like that master is truly a master."

Li Qingshan was sweating big drops in his mind. Fortunately he casually said several years ago, and not a month ago, otherwise this Sick Yellow Tiger might well die of fright.

At the same time he understood all the more that supernatural skills and mortal martial arts were things at two entirely different levels. Right now he wasn't Sick Yellow Tiger's match, but it was only because he'd cultivated for not even two months, while the other side underwent twenty or thirty years of hard labor.

“Does the chief hunter have any matter, coming this time?”

“Kid, do you have any interest in settling down in Horse Rein Village?” Although he casually asked, it carried a flavor that make it difficult to refuse.

“Ok!” Li Qingshan straightforwardly agreed, and it was Sick Yellow Tiger who stared blankly instead: “You don’t have any attachment for your home village?”

“Will the chief hunter promise to let me leave peacefully if I don’t agree?” Li Qingshan calmly said: “Moreover, I once heard a saying.”

“What saying?”

“In this life everywhere is one’s hometown. Whether Crouching Bull Village or Horse Rein Village, it’s of no difference to me. Here I might even learn some hunting archery. If I say it like this, does the chief hunter understand? My ambition doesn’t lie amidst this piece of mountain forest.”

“Just relying on your low grade martial arts, trying to mix in the roads of the martial world will be but a road toward death for you. You’ll merely be a small fish and a small fry for the disciples of those great famous sects, how does it compare to living free and unrestrained in the mountain forests?”

“Eh? Could it be that it’s not enough even with the chief hunter’s abilities?” Li Qingshan was somewhat surprised. Sick Yellow Tiger’s fame in the surrounding areas could be said to be loud and dazzling.

“I’m not afraid of making you laugh. My archery still counts as decent and it once reached some fame, but experts are innumerable in the martial world. You train for several decades, then a teenage little baby comes along and kills you as easily as killing a dog. I ate a big loss, and being able to come back alive is already a blessing.”

Li Qingshan pursed his lips. Not only did he feel no dread, but on the contrary he felt a rising fascination.

Chapter 24: Searching For The Spirit

Ginseng

Sick Yellow Tiger knew that his psychological blow wasn't strong enough, and he said some more: "Seeing as your blade art and fist art are free and uninhibited, you must be walking the road of external martial arts. This kind of martial arts can be learned relatively fast, but without the support of a top-rank inner martial art, reaching the center from the outer, by the time you attain the realm of outer and inner dual cultivation, it'll probably be difficult to become a first-grade master. Being an innate master is even more hopeless."

"First-grade master? Then what grade am I? Also what's an innate master?"

Li Qingshan's series of questions made Sick Yellow Tiger believe the words about the person of high skills transmitting his techniques to him. How would he not know about this if he had a proper master: "Qingshan, your skill isn't sufficient yet to be third grade."

"That's why it's low grade!"

"You can be called 'proficient' since you could overthrow those ginseng gatherers. You're still young, you don't need to be too discouraged, as long as you train properly you'll be able to become a third-grade master, then you'll be able to run rampant. Qingshan, this will absolutely not be a problem with your natural aptitudes."

Sick Yellow Tiger feared his psychological attack was too strong and had dampened his drive, so he kindly comforted him. But how could he know that the goal the green bull had given Li Qingshan from the start was to run rampant in the whole human world. As to the so-called inner martial art, it was even more of a joke.

“Innate masters dwell in even more profound mysteries. First they have to open their whole body’s meridians, break through the door of life and death, transforming their inner strength into true qi. They are able to circulate it at will inside their bodies, not suffering from any hindrance anymore. Once the true qi is strong to a certain level, they can even radiate it at will out of their bodies and injure people.”

Wait a little, it seems like I can already circulate the qi inside my body at will, I just can’t release it outside. It must be because the amount is still too small.

Li Qingshan suddenly understood that from the beginning he never stood on the same starting line compared to other ordinary persons. The road he walked on was something common martial artists had no way to imagine.

“Chief hunter, I will certainly become an innate master.”

Sick Yellow Tiger praised him with a “good ambition,” but his expression was noncommittal. Innate master? Back when he first heard about those things, wasn’t he also filled with the same kind of lofty ambitions and magnificent aspirations? How could it be so

easy.

It was as if he saw a younger version of himself from back then: “If you really become an innate master, I’ll give you this chief hunter title of mine.” This actually wasn’t a casual commitment. The way he thought about it, even if Li Qingshan became an innate master, it would be several decades later. How could he know that the one in front of his eyes was already his so-called “innate master.”

Li Qingshan thought of something: “Chief hunter, it looks like your body isn’t in a great shape?”

“I was born frail and weak. The doctors originally said I couldn’t survive, but my mother didn’t believe them and stubbornly brought me up. I also didn’t believe I couldn’t match the other kids in the village, so I stubbornly trained my martial arts. But my foundation remains frail, and over the years I’ve accumulated painful wounds. I fear I don’t have much more time left to live.”

Li Qingshan actually felt some admiration for this man in front of him. Even without great supernatural skills or great techniques, the perseverance and determination was enough to set an example for him.

“Don’t worry chief hunter, you just need to find the spirit ginseng, it’ll surely be able to cure you.”

“En, although it’s as elusive as floating mist, there’s always a lifeline left. We’ll take the opportunity of the Ginseng King

Village's current upheaval and start searching the mountains today. Do you want to come along?"

"My body's condition isn't yet fully recovered, I probably won't be able to lend a hand to the chief hunter." Of course Li Qingshan wouldn't agree. The other party was merely saying but they wouldn't really trust him.

"Alright, then let's wait until your body's wounds heal, we'll fight again then. I'll arrange someone to teach you archery." Sick Yellow Tiger patted his shoulder.

After Sick Yellow Tiger left, Li Qingshan immediately inquired the green bull.

The green bull said as if it was beneath his contempt: "What first grade second grade, do we also need to rank ants by strength? But this spirit ginseng will actually be of great help to your cultivation if you could obtain it."

Li Qingshan could only watch it with meaningful eyes.

"Now you can learn hunting and not rely on me anymore, I'm very gratified. I'll finally be able to get some rest. From today on, take good care of yourself!"

It was as expected. The green bull had always followed the same line, and it would absolutely not act to help him. Li Qingshan also didn't truly plan on depending on it. As to play the two villages

and snatch the food from the tiger's mouth, he had even less this kind of self-confidence. Most probably it would be throwing his life away in vain. He just sighed a few time with emotion, and erase this matter from his mind. He chewed a ginseng, sat in meditation and circulated his qi, only falling asleep in the depths of the night.

A ghost rose from the locust wood plaque like a strand of green smoke, shaping into a handsome child. He took a look at Li Qingshan and seemed to make a decision. He rode the night wind and flew toward the mountains, his bloodless lips moving open and closed.

If someone proficient in lips-reading could see, they would know that the words repeated in his mouth were “spirit ginseng.”

The green bull opened its eyes and took a look, then closed them back and returned to sleep.

Little An flew out of Horse Rein Village, flying into the undulating ranges of mountains. He freely went through layer after layer of forest trees, but from time to time he had to avoid the incoming fierce mountain winds. He saw in the far distance a dot of fire light, and when he flew close he discovered it was the Horse Rein Village hunters carrying weapons while resting beside a bonfire. Sick Yellow Tiger was discussing in a low voice with several hunters about battle techniques. Little An circled a few laps around and listened for a while, then rode the wind as he flew toward Old White Peak.

He carefully examined each river stream, each piece of rock. Of

course, his attention would occasionally be attracted by small animals he met on the way, and he would forget his original goal, but he would always be able to return to his senses very quickly and continue searching. There was only one thought left in his mind: I must, I must find the spirit ginseng, this way I'll be able to help him.

During the fourth [night watch period](#), the ginseng gatherers launched a night raid, but they were killed and beaten back by Sick Yellow Tiger who was long ago prepared. However neither side had found the spirit ginseng. It was the same for Little An.

1 am to 3 am

Using the time left before sunrise he returned to the village, his face full of exhaustion, almost fed up. It wasn't easy for a child's thoughts to persist for so long. Moreover, this work was too lonely for him, he'd already had enough of the taste of loneliness. But looking at the face of Li Qingshan who was still asleep, his heart suddenly bubbled anew with motivation. He shook his fists and drilled inside the locust wood plaque to sleep.

In the early morning, a grim looking old hunter called for Li Qingshan: "The chief hunter told me to teach you archery!"

Li Qingshan noticed that his left foot was a little lame, but he only quickly glanced over it once to stay polite. Unexpectedly the old hunter already noticed and calmly said: "It was bitten by a wolf. Follow me!"

To the west of the village was an open space where a group of

teenagers already stood waiting. The oldest ones were about the same age as Li Qingshan, while the youngest ones still had snot hanging from their noses. But everyone was carrying a hunting bow on their backs, and their gazes when looking at Li Qingshan were a little guarded and unkind.

“Grandpa Cang, he’s also with us?”

Grandpa lightly nodded and didn’t explain too much, directly saying: “Pull your bows!”

This group of kids suddenly stopped talking. They pulled their hunting bows and aimed at the distant target. Grandpa Cang corrected their postures one by one and explained the main aspects of archery, tossing Li Qingshan to the side.

Li Qingshan didn’t feel bored, but instead listened carefully on the sideline. Thus an hour went by. Grandpa Cang ordered a rest and finally said to Li Qingshan: “Better first train your strength!” before pointing at a row of stone locks on the side.

Li Qingshan went and snatched the stone locks. Compared to the green bull, this kind of teacher who didn’t even take your life seriously, this level of cold shoulder was still within his acceptable range.

Grandpa Cang exposed some surprised expression. He pretty disliked Li Qingshan, but he still couldn’t defy Sick Yellow Tiger’s instruction, so he gave him a cold reception on purpose. It could also count as polishing his temperament. But he didn’t think that

he wouldn't get angry at all, which was completely different from what he imagined, so he thought: "No wonder the chief hunter took a fancy to him!"

"Kid, where do you come from?" That group of children couldn't resist any longer and came forward, their faces full of provocation.

"Crouching Bull Village."

"Hmph, a mere farm worker, you actually have some bull strength. We heard you even took a bull along. We don't need bulls here, just kill it and eat the meat!"

You couldn't ask Li Qingshan to lower himself to their level and scream nonsense, but he wouldn't let them throw insults as they pleased either. He put strength in his two arms and flung two stone locks of several dozen pounds in the air.

"Mom!" This group of kids scattered in all directions with panic-stricken faces. When a stone lock several dozen pounds heavy smashed down, it couldn't but smash your brain open.

The stone locks heavily dropped down. Li Qingshan didn't dodge or hide, instead focusing all his attention and observing the timing. He grabbed the stone locks in one try, then his body spun on itself to diffuse the force of impact. He smiled as he looked at them.

This group of kids stared dumbstruck and swallowed their saliva.

How much strength was that. Most of them could lift those two stone locks, but it was impossible to throw them so high, not even mentioning catching the stone locks back.

Li Qingshan didn't pay them any mind anymore and merely said with a smile: "Grandpa Cang, do I still need to train my strength?"

Chapter 25: Bow Pulling And Arrow Firing

Grandpa Cang was finally shocked: “Inborn divine strength?” Then he repeatedly shook his head: “I forgot, you cultivate a strength-based outer martial art, it’s not very surprising if you have some strength!”

“Archery isn’t something you succeed at just by strength alone. Hold it properly!” Grandpa Cang removed the hunting bow from his back and tossed it to Li Qingshan.

“It’s Grandpa Cang’s bullhorn bow, it’s one stone heavy!” “Grandpa Cang deliberately wants to embarrass this kid. It’s not the same thing pulling a bow and throwing stone locks.”

A stone was a hundred and twenty pounds. Ordinary hunting bows didn’t pursue might but precision and deftness instead. There were very few bows that were so hard. When bows were too hard, the power was no doubt enhanced, but the precision and firing speed would be very poor if the hunter couldn’t operate it.

If you met a wild beast in the mountains and your first arrow missed, then there was no time to fire a second arrow before the fierce beast pounced on you, and it was a sure road to death. Those who could master this kind of hard bows were all divine archers who had no troubles felling tigers and panthers under their arrows inside the mountains.

Li Qingshan weighed the hunting bow. This was a top-notch oaken bow wrapped in animal hide, with natural silk twining

around it, and a bowstring made from bull tendon. It was lithe and graceful but possessed great strength.

Following Grandpa Cang's teachings from earlier, he promptly lowered his waist and pulled the bow open in one motion, the muscles on his body also following suit and pulling open.

Grandpa Cang discovered with surprise that his posture was unexpectedly very in line with the standard. He remembered that he was watching and listening on the sideline just now, so he somewhat pointed the critical points again. Li Qingshan wasn't lacking in intuitive understanding, and after a moment of effort, it actually seemed as if he had gone through three months of hard labor.

It wasn't easy to start with a bow that was too hard when one wished to learn archery. It was better to train first with a soft bow and practice firing many arrows, slowly correcting the posture. Only then was it possible to move on to stronger bows.

Grandpa Cang had directly given Li Qingshan his own bullhorn bow precisely with the intent of knocking him a down a notch. Even if your strength was great and you managed to pull it open, it didn't count for fart if you couldn't properly aim with it. But Li Qingshan's performance was beyond his anticipation.

It wasn't truly that Li Qingshan's comprehension far surpassed others. What the [Bull Demon Strong Fist] taught him was the most basic technique to control energy and manipulate strength. Whether blade spear sword or halberd, as long as he grasped the essential points, he could master them very fast.

Sweat seeped from Li Qingshan's forehead. The posture to maintain the bow pulled open indeed required a lot more strength than the lifting of stone locks, and there was a dull ache in every muscle and tendon in his body.

"This is actually a good way to train strength. Practicing my fist technique is also very exhausting, but the punches all land in the air. In the future I need to buy a strong bow especially for practicing strength, it will certainly be of great benefits."

"Alright, aim at the target and let me see you fire an arrow!" Grandpa Cang instructed him.

Li Qingshan put down the hunting bow and took a slight rest. He twirled a feather arrow in his hand and once again drew the bow open, facing a target fifty steps away.

Grandpa Cang instructed beside him: "Calm your heart, don't rush to fire the arrow, watch the target!"

Li Qingshan's eyes stared straight at the target. Suddenly they lit up, but no one noticed because of the bright sunlight. Under his single-minded focus, it was almost as if this target became bigger and not so far away.

In the legends, when divine archers trained their archery in ancient times, they would tie a tick to a wire string then watch them days after nights. They would see the tick slowly become bigger, first as big as a cartwheel, later as big as a mountain peak

blocking their sights. Then with one arrow they would run the tick's body through.

At present Li Qingshan had this kind of sensation. He knew in his heart that most of it came from the bull tears' effects. It made the fast appear slow, the far appear near, the clarity piercing through like the moonlight.

“Go in!” Inspiration came to Li Qingshan's heart. A feather arrow left the bowstring and flew toward the target.

“Du!” The arrow sank deeply in the wooden target, but it didn't hit the bullseye, merely falling at the target's fringes, barely avoiding hitting empty air.

Li Qingshan felt slightly embarrassed: “It didn't hit the inner bullseye, but it should also count as hitting in.”

The crowd around were all rendered speechless from surprise. Firing the first arrow in his whole life, pulling a bow a stone heavy, hitting a target fifty steps away, such a person was unheard of even among those people who lived their lives as bow hunters,.

“Where does this guy really come from?!”

Grandpa struggled to keep his face calm: “It'll be alright if you properly practice in the future.” As an old archer hand, he understood the most clearly that Li Qingshan couldn't estimate the influence of gravity or the effect from the mountain winds with

the first arrow of his.

“I feel this bow still isn’t strong enough!” As they said “[to draw a bow ought to draw the strongest.](#)” Li Qingshan wanted to pursue the kind of hard bow that would require one to exhaust one’s entire strength to pull open.

From a poem by Tang poet Du Fu, culturally considered the greatest Chinese poet along Li Bai.

Grandpa Cang didn’t say much when he heard. He took the bow from Li Qingshan’s hands, and bent his bow toward the target, his muddy eyes suddenly becoming piercing sharp like an eagle.

His right hand moved repeatedly. There was only Li Qingshan at the scene who could clearly see that he pulled out three arrows in succession.

“Du!” Three feather arrows formed a straight line that sank in the bullseye, but it merely made a single sound to the ears.

The field was first a great quiet, then a series of cheers and applause burst out.

“Pearl String Arrows!” How would Li Qingshan not know this archery technique’s name. He’d read of it from books in his previous world, only he had taken it as a mere toy.

But seeing it with his own eyes, he only realized then it was a genuinely supreme killing skill. He estimated in his mind that

unless he could cling to the opponent in close combat, it would certainly be greatly difficult to escape this kind of archery technique. Moreover if Grandpa Cang mounted an ambush and sneak attacked him, he would certainly die with no doubts left.

Grandpa Cang saw that Li Qingshan didn't talk too much. Li Qingshan had already understood his meaning; what was he talking about "to draw a bow ought to draw the strongest" if he couldn't apply this kind of archery skill. It wasn't that he couldn't pull open a heavier bow either, he merely chose the most appropriate one. Li Qingshan came forward and offered his respectful greeting and sincerely said: "Please Grandpa Cang teach me the art of the bow!"

"In the future you're also part of my Horse Rein Village. I don't need you to say as much, I will wholeheartedly teach you in any case. As to how much you can learn, it'll depend on your ability. But I have faith your archery will certainly exceed mine in the future." Grandpa Cang felt comfortable in his heart and also became more amicable.

He originally didn't like Li Qingshan, but he was shocked when Li Qingshan displayed his natural talent and strength. Then when the latter lowered his attitude, his own mood went through a turnaround, not only immediately recognizing Li Qingshan's status but also starting to feel great appreciation for him.

This evaluation made everyone shocked. Grandpa Cang had the strongest archery in Horse Rein Village, this was something publicly recognized. Even the chief hunter Sick Yellow Tiger's archery had been personally taught by him. The whole village

would probably be shocked that he gave someone such an evaluation.

This group of later generation kids who were unkind to Li Qingshan at first also surrounded him, lively discussing with everyone around, faintly revealing a more intimate intent. This wasn't actually currying favor or social climbing, but it was merely that what they most respected at their age were precisely strong people.

Perhaps there were some people who felt jealousy and wanted to exclude him, but none had the courage to deride or provoke. The atmosphere in the field indeed became more harmonious. Li Qingshan understood all the more that the recognition and approval of others didn't go through what flowery words or graceful speech, but through the display of sufficient strength.

If he didn't have this strength and wanted to achieve the same results through social intercourse, it would not only have required a very long time and shameless flattery, it would also twist his own state of mind.

Practicing until dusk, Li Qingshan was already able to land each arrow in the bullseye, but firing this kind of arrow always needed preparation. It was far from Grandpa's firing on the go, and he was even farther away from the Pearl String Arrows. But in the eyes of the observers, it was already something hard enough to imagine.

For the next several days, Li Qingshan submerged himself in the art of the bow, dedicating himself to progress day by day. Although he didn't give up on the [Bull Demon Strong Fist], the pace of

progress became extremely slow.

Enduring until several days later, Li Qingshan returned back to his house and carefully opened the wine jar. A thick medicine flavored liquor smell assaulted his nostrils. He directly picked the wine jar and drank a big mouthful.

Chapter 26: Try Out His Talent Once More

A thick warm current started to boil inside his belly. He immediately stood up and practiced his punches in the yard until the warmth inside his stomach entirely dispersed. Only then did he breathe in relief and stop.

Usually he would feel tired after training his fist technique for so long, but today he was in great spirits. The effects of this medicinal liquor made from soaked ginseng were much better than simply eating meat.

Moreover the shred of true qi inside his body also seemed to grow a little. Although it was minute, it was nevertheless genuine progress.

“A medicinal liquor soaked from ordinary ginseng is already like this. I don’t know what effect it would have if it were soaked with that spirit ginseng?” He also once had this kind of thoughts, but thinking about the difficulty, then thinking again about the aftermaths of obtaining the spirit ginseng, he could only drop it.

In a mere few days, there were already several hunters carried down the mountains, the dead dead and the wounded wounded. It was obvious that the group of ginseng gatherers weren’t an easy bunch to deal with either. Although Li Qingshan had agreed to join the Horse Rein Village, it was a mere temporary arrangement, and he had no actual plan to insert himself in the dispute between the two villages.

In the turn of an eye, it was already the fifteenth of the eighth month, the season for the [mid-autumn festival](#). Inside the mountain forest, Sick Yellow Tiger looked at the tired faces around him. During these days, he'd led the hunters through the mountains. They had to keep their vigilance up at all time, even if they held the upper hand and had almost killed the ginseng gatherers to an utter rout.

Lunar calendar. The mid-autumn festival is held on the 15th of the eighth lunar month

But it was also difficult to prevent losses on his side, and they likewise weren't in good shape, while the spirit ginseng stayed a thing from the legends that no one had seen with their own eyes. This kind of meaningless sacrifice was indeed already meaningless.

Sick Yellow Tiger let out a long sigh and issued the order to return to the village. Little Black hurriedly said: "Chief hunter, you can't give up, your health." Sick Yellow Tiger said: "The village comes first!" Not only they had to reunite with their families for the mid-autumn festival, winter was also coming, and the village had to make preparations to live through it.

In a corner of Horse Rein Village, in Grandpa Cang's yard, Sick Yellow Tiger was grinning:

"Grandpa Cang, how's that kid?"

"He's an innate divine archer, in the future his archery will certainly be above yours or mine. Only..."

“Only what?”

“His heart isn’t in Horse Rein Village. Even if we let him join Horse Rein Village it would also be for nothing. We’re hunters guarding the mountains, while he’s a wolf, moreover he’s a lone wolf. He will definitely travel far away from here!”

“Lone wolf? That’s because he’s never experienced ‘lone wolves die easily while wolf herds are hard to contend with’. I’ll go see him, I don’t believe that he’s not temped by the Horse Rein Village’s ‘chief hunter’ position.”

“You’re truly determined to make him chief hunter.”

Sick Yellow Tiger laughed: “That’s still going to depend on his abilities.”

“Qingshan, was the living conditions to your satisfaction during this time?” As soon as Sick Yellow Tiger set foot in the courtyard, he sent his greetings outspokenly and forthrightly.

“Many thanks for the chief hunter’s concerns, I’ve lived very well.” Since the matter about Li Qingshan killing seven ginseng gatherers spread out in the village, everyone became friendlier with him. But it was also because this insinuated that he had forged a sworn enmity with the Ginseng King Village, and since that group of ginseng gatherers weren’t an amicable bunch, he could only depend on the Horse Rein Village to survive.

But was this kind of arrangements really the only choice he had?

Li Qingshan said: “Chief hunter, I want to try exchanging a few blows with you again!”

Sick Yellow Tiger’s surprised vision met Li Qingshan’s eyes filled with self-confidence.

Sick Yellow Tiger said: “Alright, then let me see your achievements during those days.”

“Hah!” Li Qingshan didn’t wait for Sick Yellow Tiger to adopt his posture and suddenly fought over, directly sending a fist without any fancy, violently punching toward Sick Yellow Tiger’s chest. It faintly made the sound of air being broken through.

“What a fierce kid!” Sick Yellow Tiger used his arms to block. With a resounding “pa”, he retreated three steps deng deng deng, only stopping then. He swung his painful arms a few times and there was some astonishment on his face: “What a powerful strength!” Last time they fought, he could estimate that his strength wasn’t so great back then even if they hadn’t clashed head to head.

Li Qingshan said: “Watch this move again!” He rushed over and attacked continuously, his punches successively attacking his opponent’s face and chest. His offensive was like a violent hurricane, displaying his free and unrestrained fists to the apex, his momentum fierce to the utter limit.

Sick Yellow Tiger had been temporarily too confident and lost the decisive opportunity. He fell downwind, but it also stimulated the pride in his chest, “I won’t believe you’re really superior to me in strength and energy.” His inner strength circulated and flowed inside his meridians to his arms. Swelling with the inner strength, his arms almost doubled in thickness as he met Li Qingshan’s fists face on.

For martial artists, the whole of their martial art resided in this inner strength. Fighting like this, he was already using his genuine power.

“Bang bang bang bang!” The two men’s arms intersected each other. Each of them met force with force, and each strike created giant sounds of collision with flesh and bones, like two wild beasts biting and tearing at each other. It was very crude and brutal.

Sick Yellow Tiger’s experience was after all rich. He calculated the right timing and smashed his fist toward Li Qingshan’s chest.

Li Qingshan unexpectedly didn’t try to hide or dodge, but instead launched his own fist toward Sick Yellow Tiger’s face.

Sick Yellow Tiger thought: “I painstakingly cultivated my inner martial art for so many years. Even a calf would collapse under the strength of my punch. Even if you cultivate a hard outer martial art, you’ll still be injured.” As to Li Qingshan’s fist, he didn’t put much mind into it. When his fist struck Li Qingshan first, Li Qingshan’s body would necessarily go stiff for a moment.

With a “bang,” the punch hit Li Qingshan’s chest. Li Qingshan’s body indeed paused an instant, but instantly restored its condition and wasn’t affected. Sick Yellow Tiger was greatly surprised, and hurriedly rolled away awkwardly. The fist scratched past his cheek, causing vague pain.

Li Qingshan smiled “hehe.” He stood still and no longer pursued to attack.

Sick Yellow Tiger stood up: “You’re actually fine?!” He had the clearest understanding about the power of his own punch. Even if Li Qingshan could block the fist’s strength with his external martial art, he still couldn’t block the true qi contained inside his fist, but it actually wasn’t effective.

Li Qingshan rubbed his chest: “It’s very painful!” Right now there had been a breath of qi penetrating through his skin and hitting inside his body, but it’d been instantly dispelled by the true qi inside and didn’t cause the slightest harm. Afterward he’d caught his breath back right away and almost struck Sick Yellow Tiger.

If he had to borrow Sick Yellow Tiger’s words to explain it, it’d be the difference in quality between acquired inner strength and innate true qi.

Sick Yellow Tiger didn’t know whether to cry or laugh. This punch he was fully confident in only obtained this kind of evaluation. But any martial artist had an ambitious and competitive heart, so he shouted: “Then take some more punches from me!”

The two of them then started fighting again. This time, Sick Yellow Tiger no longer had any reservation and exhausted all of his skills and power. His figure became even much faster and more violent, making Li Qingshan unable to block. His fists fell on Li Qingshan's body like unceasing raindrops.

In the eyes of observers, it was Sick Yellow Tiger who was pressuring Li Qingshan and occupied the upper hand.

But the two men's feelings were each different. Li Qingshan merely felt almost as if Sick Yellow Tiger's movements had become slower, becoming not so much unpredictable anymore. Even if the fists landed on his body, it was a little pain at most and he might as well not pay attention to them. He resembled a reef in the middle of a tempest under this blind assault, standing mighty and motionless.

Meanwhile, Sick Yellow Tiger became more astonished the longer he fought. Li Qingshan's speed, reaction, and strength were all a lot stronger than the last time they exchanged hands. It was simply like it was another person. He already couldn't easily hit Li Qingshan's vital spots, but hitting other places was also completely useless.

In the middle of the battle, Li Qingshan's attacks became all the more sophisticated. From time to time he fired out one or two extremely exquisite punches, making him fall into danger, and it was only thanks to his experience from facing enemies for many years that he could dispel it. The violence of the wind blown up by Li Qingshan's fists told him that he would be finished as long as he

ate a single one. The distance between the two neared at flying speed.

So such a strange scene emerged. One man kept getting hit while his momentum became more victorious as the fight went on, while another man didn't suffer the slightest harm but his momentum instead became weaker and weaker.

Sick Yellow Tiger's forehead began to sweat. When he started feeling tired, Li Qingshan still had the same expression and his heart beat at the same speed.

Bulls were originally animals with great endurance, and the higher the cultivation, the more the difference between martial arts and supernatural skills would manifest itself.

Sick Yellow Tiger suddenly opened the distance with a leap and shouted: "Stop!"

Chapter 27: The Spirit Ginseng's Emergence

Li Qingshan let out a long breath: "So much fun!"

Sick Yellow Tiger's arms trembled. This was the result from colliding with Li Qingshan's hands. He looked Li Qingshan up and down from the distance, queerness filling his face: "How do you really train?" This kind of progress speed was simply like a monster.

At first he had taken a fancy to Li Qingshan's will and martial arts. He thought he'd found an unpolished diamond among a pile of rubble and was determined to temper it, see if he had the qualification to inherit the position of chief hunter. But in the end he discovered that he still had underestimated Li Qingshan.

Li Qingshan thought for a moment: "I recently drank medicinal liquor soaked with ginseng, it's a prescription left behind by my master."

Sick Yellow Tiger hesitated a moment: "Can you let me see?"

Originally, following the martial world's rules he couldn't carelessly inquire about those things, but he really wanted to know too much what was going on.

Li Qingshan straightforwardly said: "No problem!"

Sick Yellow Tiger asked about the prescription and Li Qingshan

told him the truth of it. Sick Yellow Tiger nodded: “This prescription is indeed exquisite, but this kind of medicinal power is really too great. It also uses too much ginseng, you can’t drink too much of it. A small cup a day is enough.”

Apart from that, there wasn’t too much of a difference with ordinary medicinal wines. He especially went into Li Qingshan’s room and tasted it, coming to the same conclusion. He didn’t believe that just drinking medicinal liquor soaked in ginseng could make someone’s strength progress so fast, otherwise wouldn’t people from Ginseng King Village all be masters peerless in the world?

But it wasn’t appropriate to ask any further, so he could only hold back his bellyful of doubts. He didn’t think that the reason lay in the martial art cultivated by Li Qingshan, because there were no extraordinary divine arts among outer martial arts.

Of course Li Qingshan couldn’t tell him that he drank this kind of medicinal wine by the bowl, at least several big bowls of it going down his belly every day. During this time he’d about drank all of it.

“Right, what grade is my current martial ability?”

“It’s barely enough for third-grade.” Sick Yellow Tiger still remembered that some days ago he gave the evaluation that Li Qingshan would have absolutely no problem becoming a third-grade master. Now it became true in the turn of an eye, it was simply like a dream.

Li Qingshan greedily said: “Merely third-grade?”

Sick Yellow Tiger’s eyes stared ahead for a moment. Those who could train their martial skills to third-grade could already be called masters, but this guy was actually not satisfied. Wasn’t that the same as saying that his own martial ability was also “merely third-grade.”

He was someone who had been chief hunter of the Horse Rein Village for many years and wasn’t resigned to lose to this kid in momentum: “What I excel at isn’t martial arts but archery. Merely on martial arts, the Ginseng King Village is a bit stronger than us, but only we dare to call ourselves the Horse Rein Village. We have strong bows and powerful crossbows, even first-grade masters won’t dare fight us head on.”

Moreover another reason was that his disease was already nearing his heart, but despite being called Sick Tiger, the word “sick” was his most taboo one, and no matter what he wouldn’t use it as a pretext.

“Yes, I’ve been practicing the Pearl String Arrows recently. I can already fire out three arrows in succession, but unfortunately the precision is still a little lacking, please chief hunter give me a few pointers.” Li Qingshan had seen Sick Yellow Tiger’s archery with his own eyes and naturally wouldn’t underestimate it.

Pearl String Arrows, can fire out three arrows?! You only trained the art of the bow for a month. Sick Yellow Tiger felt that the

psychological attacks he suffered today were a little too much. He waved his hand: “Better go ask Grandpa Cang to guide you tomorrow! I need to go home and have my family reunion meal.”

In his heart he understood that this kid might really have the qualifications to wander the martial world, so he put aside the matter about the chief hunter. If he could have had this kind of progress speed back then, he would certainly not have returned to Horse Rein Village either.

“Right, it’s mid-autumn festival again!” Li Qingshan watched the full moon just risen in the sky. He had no family he could reunite with, but at least he had a monster and a ghost beside him so they could also eat a meal together. He went to prepare.

He laid green grass for the green bull, took meat and wine for himself, and he also prepared incense and ritual paper money for Little An.

All things were properly in place, but he couldn’t see trace of Little An’s shadow. “Brother bull, where did Little An go.”

“No idea!”

Li Qingshan mumbled to himself: “This little ghost has been playing wild lately, he’s not clinging to me anymore. It’s really weird, let us wait him for a bit!”

A full moon rising, silence reigning over the Old White Peak.

The bright moon sprinkled its pure splendor through the gaps between the clouds.

Several people wearing bamboo hats lay prone on the lush grass, watching the highest cliff on Old White Peak, as if waiting for something.

“So much effort and blood spent, so many people dead, a hatred of life and death forged with Horse Rein Village, but we haven’t seen even one single hair of the spirit ginseng. Now even the people from Horse Rein Village have already gone down the mountain to reunite with their families, but we still need to keep watch, what’s the village master’s brain thinking about.”

“What do you understand, the spirit ginseng is something that possesses spirituality. After being alarmed like this it’ll naturally conceal itself out of sight, but today is the night of the full moon. The spirit ginseng will certainly appear and receive the moonlight. The village master has made plans long ago, as long as we can obtain the spirit ginseng, the village master’s power will greatly increase. By that time what we would need to fear a Horse Rein Village. When the time comes we’ll flatten Horse Rein Village, rob all their food and wealth, thoroughly play with their women. Only this could count as taking revenge for our hatred.”

Someone chided in a low repressed voice beside: “Be quiet, don’t ruin the village master’s grand matter!”

The human voices immediately fell down, leaving only the soon

to be dead autumn bugs quietly singing. The full moon rose to its peak.

A small man a foot tall suddenly drilled out from the ground. It hesitatingly walked toward the high cliff where the moonlight was brightest. Looking carefully, how was it a small man. It was a ginseng, it was just that it had a vaguely humanoid shape, and in the dimness of the night it looked like a small man. It walked light as a feather, as if it were floating.

The ginseng gatherers hiding among the grasses suddenly held their breaths, not daring to make a single sound. They had never seen such a miraculous spirit herb in a lifetime of gathering ginseng.

The spirit ginseng looked left and right for a while, apparently making sure there was no one, then floated to the highest point of the mountain cliff. The silks of moonlight intertwined around its body when it settled down.

“Let’s go!” With this order the ginseng gatherers acted together. A net dropped from the sky, rushing toward the spirit ginseng.

The spirit ginseng was in the middle of immersing itself in the moonlight, and it was captured in the net before it could react in time, then lifted from the ground. This net was woven from bull muscles and tendons, so no matter how it struggled it couldn’t break free.

Four ginseng gatherers raised their brows in delight and beamed

in joy. They crowded in and carefully observed it.

“There are many cliffs on this Old White Peak, and we have people ambushing all of them. This ginseng actually bumped into our hands, it’s really the heavens assisting us. When we go back we’ll surely have some soup to drink, and maybe we can even become masters.”

“And maybe we could eat the whole root and become divine immortals!” The several men laughed loudly.

A ginseng gatherer’s laughter suddenly froze. A sword point bright as snow emerged from his throat. It would have been a challenge to turn his head back.

The sword point shrank back and he immediately flopped on the ground. He only saw a vague black shadow as he fell.

The other ginseng gatherers reacted with angry roars and drew out their waist sabers, slashing toward the black shadow. The edge of a sword flitted across their necks like a spirit snake, and several bloody blooms splashed around.

In an instant, four ginseng gatherers died a violent death without the time to even use one move. It was obvious how high the martial arts of the newly arrived was.

“I didn’t think that the rumors were true. Hmph, even this bunch of wild mountain laborers dare to enjoy this kind of spirit

treasure.” A young man in luxurious clothes stylishly recovered his long sword, stretching his hand to catch the spirit ginseng falling to the ground at the same time. He couldn’t repress the excitement in his heart either. As long as he obtained this treasure, it would certainly help greatly increase his martial power.

But at this moment something strange suddenly happened. The spirit ginseng that was falling down suddenly moved aside, making the man clutch empty air.

Chapter 28: The “South” Word’s Promise

The man stared. He saw the spirit ginseng move up and down in the air and he felt great anxiety. He operated his movement technique and tried to grab the spirit ginseng. But the spirit ginseng directly flew down the cliff, so he could only stare with big eyes and watch it disappear inside the darkness, feeling depressed enough to puke blood.

“Impossible, I have to snatch this spirit ginseng in my hand. When I go back I’ll let father dispatch men and horses to search the mountain.”

The man thought that it was the ginseng itself that showed some wondrous ability, but if he could have opened his spirit eyes, he’d have seen that the spirit ginseng was tightly grasped inside a pair of small pale white hands. He was like the mantis that stalked the cicada, but unaware of the oriole behind. A ghost shadow he couldn’t see had been hiding in the dark from the start.

Under the cliff, Little An exhausted the whole of his strength as he held onto the spirit ginseng, riding the night wind toward Horse Rein Village, the joy inside his heart threatening to burst out. It was also thanks to him nourishing his spiritual body inside the locust wood plaque during these days that he had the strength to seize such a heavy thing.

Inside the courtyard, Li Qingshan yawned, but suddenly his eyes lit up and he saw Little An float in from afar: “Little ghost, where did you run off to!”

Little An bit his lips in a reserved and modest way, repressed his inner joy, and held the spirit ginseng in front of him.

“Eh, what’s that? Ginseng?” Li Qingshan held the spirit ginseng and lightly sniffed it. A waft of a strange clear fragrance gushed into his nostrils, and he immediately felt his mind vibrate, while the true qi inside his body became much more lively.

Li Qingshan suddenly thought of a certain something: “This is... the spirit ginseng!” He had a little trouble believing that he was presently holding this spiritual herb that two village strove over to the point of spending many dozens of lives as they killed each other into a hatred of blood.

The green bull lazily chewed on green grasses: “What else did you think the little ghost ran out to do every night?”

Li Qingshan found out that Little An’s face was indeed fill with fatigue, but also boundless happiness, even pointing his little hand to his mouth, as if telling him to eat it.

Those few days, Little An had gone out every dusk and returned close to dawn. He had communicated much less with him, so he was still thinking Little An was yearning for freedom and was of a mind to let him go away. He only realized at this moment that all of this was originally for his own sake.

“You little guy!” Li Qingshan’s nose stung: “Why didn’t you say it earlier!”

Little An smiled bashfully, again pointing at his mouth.

Even if Li Qingshan had a heart made of iron or stone, he still couldn't help but be moved when faced with those clear pure eyes that didn't contain a shred of selfishness. He asked the green bull: "Little An can also use this spirit ginseng right?"

The green bull said: "This spirit ginseng is a rare treasure of nature, the spiritual qi contained within has great advantages even for yin ghost types. However, if you used it you could effortlessly train to the strength of one bull, can you really bear to?"

Li Qingshan said: "What would I be reluctant about, the spirit ginseng was something Little An obtained to begin with, let's just have Little An use it. I can just slowly cultivate the supernatural skill." His line of conduct wasn't changed by the temptation from this spirit ginseng.

Little An immediately retreated and waved his hands.

"It's alright, I'll remember your kind feelings."

Little An just invariably shook his head, and finally simply turned into a green smoke that drilled inside the locust wood plaque.

"Hey, come out, if you don't want it I'll just throw it away."

The green bull suddenly shouted: "Since he's determined, why

are you still so stubborn and acting like a little girl. Don't tell me that in the future you won't be able to find and give him things a hundred times or a thousand times better than this spirit ginseng?"

Li Qingshan's heart trembled and he nodded: "What elder brother bull said is reason itself, it's me who was bashing my head on a brick wall. Alright, come out, I'll eat this spirit ginseng." Little An immediately flew out.

"However by reason you should have a part of this thing, I can't swallow it by myself. If you still refuse I'll become angry."

Only then did Little An agree.

Li Qingshan waved around the spirit ginseng in his hand and said: "Brother bull, how do we use this thing." Little An had the body of a ghost and had no way of eating things.

The green bull said: "Go find a needle and prick out a drop of ginseng liquid."

Li Qingshan followed his words and found a steel needle, then stabbed it inside the spirit ginseng. The spirit ginseng quivered in his hand, but he wasn't going to have any reluctance when it came to some plant. The spirit ginseng oozed a drop of ginseng liquid that hung onto the tip of the needle.

The green bull said: "Good, drop it on his forehead."

“Forehead? Little An, raise your head!”

Little An hurriedly lifted his head. The ginseng liquid fell from the needle's tip and dropped between Little An's eyebrows. His body vibrated like water ripples, and the ginseng liquid suddenly released resplendent beams of light inside his body.

Little An shut his eyes tight, his face sometimes expressing pain and sometimes expressing joy. When the light finally vanished and everything subsided, he slowly opened his eyes, and there was something different inside them. Two teardrops slid down.

“What happened?”

The green bull said: “He most likely remembered something.”

“Is it like this? Little An, you remember who you are, where your family is?” Li Qingshan hurriedly half-knelt down and looked into his eyes.

Little An hesitated a long moment and pointed to a direction, the south.

Li Qingshan quickly asked: “Your family is to the south? What city is it in, how far away is it?”

But Little An couldn't answer those questions and only shook his

head blankly.

Li Qingshan suddenly pulled out a hunting knife and started to engrave the locust wood plaque. Sawdust flew up, and a “South” character appeared in the turn of an eye on the side that had originally no word on it. He lifted it in front of Little An’s eyes.

Under the moonlight, a young man knelt on the ground on one knee and gravely pledged to a child: “No matter if I have to cross a thousand mountains and ten thousand rivers, no matter the untold difficulties and dangers, sooner or later there will come a day when I see you back home.”

The child docilely watched his silhouette, a sight forever difficult to forget, just like the red dot left between his eyebrows where the ginseng liquid had fallen.

Li Qingshan hung the wooden plaque back on his waist, and asked Little An if he felt anything different. He had no idea if this spirit ginseng had been useful.

Little An jumped in the air and flew a lap inside the yard like a whirlwind. He took the hunting knife from Li Qingshan’s hand and moved in a flurry inside the courtyard.

Ordinary people would only be able to see a knife dancing on its own, as if it had its own spirituality.

Not only was Little An even faster, he could also control heavier

things, possessing more strength. If he wanted to mount a sneak assassination, even masters from the martial world would have trouble escaping with their lives.

“Brother bull, do I also have to use it like that?”

“That would be too wasteful. The best way to use this ginseng is to fit it with other spiritual herbs and refine it into a [dan pill](#), but you don’t have this kind of luxury. You can treat this spirit ginseng the same as any other ginseng and soak it inside liquor. This way the spirit ginseng won’t wither and the spiritual qi inside will diffuse into the liquor, transforming it into spiritual wine. You’ll be able to slowly sip in the medicinal power inside. Oh right, also don’t mix it with any other ingredient.”

If you’re not familiar with Chinese novels, in xianxia novels a dan is a magical pellet made by immortals from “spiritual herbs”, usually by chanting mystical mantras and/or using magical techniques, with immortal fires, magical furnaces, etc.

“That’s a good way!” Li Qingshan knew that it was certainly impossible to digest this spirit ginseng in one go, otherwise it wouldn’t be great progress in strength but self-implosion and death: “It’s just that I’ll be worried if I don’t carry this kind of treasure on myself.”

A wine gourd flew toward Li Qingshan as soon as his voice fell. Li Qingshan grabbed it: “Then many thanks elder brother bull!” He put the spirit ginseng into the gourd and filled it with strong liquor, then hung it at his hip.

He crossed his arms. Despite his young age, with his vigorous body and such a great wine gourd hanging on him, he was filled with an expansive and uninhibited aura.

“Little An, don’t you think I’m looking more and more like someone of the martial world.”

Little An also smiled, then his face at once changed and exposed some concern. But he couldn’t speak, so he was a little anxious. Suddenly an idea flashed in his mind and he squatted on the ground, brushing away.

Li Qingshan walked forward to take a look. Little An actually wrote out a row of pretty characters. Although he didn’t understand calligraphy, he could still see that Little An’s writing was dignified and beautiful, much better than himself.

Chapter 29: Autumn Mountain Hunt

Li Qingshan hurriedly asked: “You know how to write, did you remember how to just now?”

Little An nodded and let Li Qingshan see the words he wrote.

Li Qingshan only learned then that another person had inserted himself in and attempted to snatch the spirit ginseng away, that his martial arts were very powerful. Since he had seen this treasure, he was bound not to give up and would certainly look for a way to find it.

“Looks like I still need to be a little cautious. I can’t let any rumor leak out. But when my supernatural skill goes forward another step and cultivates to the strength of one bull, I won’t need to fear anyone.”

This spirit ginseng and spiritual wine wouldn’t be better the longer it soaked anyway. Li Qingshan wouldn’t be able able to digest it if it became too concentrated. So Li Qingshan drank his first mouthful of the spiritual wine after waiting merely three to five days.

A strange fragrance spread out inside his mouth. The taste wasn’t very strong but a little faint instead. An extremely spiritual energy slowly expanded inside his body.

He didn’t dare to show any neglect and operated his supernatural skill to digest this spiritual qi. He discovered with pleasant surprise

that the effect from this mouthful of spiritual wine was simply much better than drinking a whole jar of wine soaked in ordinary ginseng.

The true qi inside his body even grew to double the amount. Although ordinary ginseng could nourish the vital essence, they were merely mortal things and couldn't be of much assistance to true qi. Meanwhile, the [Bull Demon Strong Fist] put emphasis on cultivating the body and less on cultivating qi, so the speed this true qi had been growing at had never been very fast.

But this spirit ginseng was a genuine innate treasure of nature, and it was the most nourishing for spiritual qi, so it could have this kind of effect. If things continued like this, in not too long of a time he could achieve the effect of releasing the true qi outside. By that time he could claim himself an "innate master."

"Brother bull, I once swore to drink every fine wine in the world, I suppose that's almost accomplished!" After drinking this spiritual wine, other ordinary liquors wouldn't have much taste any longer.

The green bull only returned a mocking laugh.

At this time, a racket sounded outside the door accompanied by the barks of many dogs. Sick Yellow Tiger led the village hunters and came to Li Qingshan's door to invite him up the mountain with them and participate in the autumn hunt.

Autumn was an excellent season for hunting. It wasn't only men who had to prepare food in order to pass through the winter,

animals were also the same. Each of them had eaten themselves to a plump body. It was an important gathering for the Horse Rein Village.

Many great families and clans would organize major hunting during this season, not to capture preys but only to train their disciples and descendants, matching the fall's austere and desolate nature.

Sick Yellow Tiger said: "You already learned the art of the bow, but you haven't learned yet the genuine dao of the hunter. You just follow beside me this time into the mountains!" Since exchanging blows with Li Qingshan last time, he wouldn't see Li Qingshan as an ordinary later generation kid any longer.

Li Qingshan thought a little and refused in the end: "Many thanks for the chief hunter's good intentions, but I want to hunt by myself."

The other hunters started to argue before Sick Yellow Tiger said anything.

"What, by yourself, not only you never hunted but you don't even have a decent hunting hound."

"You're really not afraid of the fierce beasts in the mountains?"

Although they admired Li Qingshan's talent that had killed seven ginseng gatherers, they still couldn't tolerate any slight when it

came to the area they were most expert in.

Sick Yellow Tiger urged him: “Hunting doesn’t rely merely on good archery and good talent.” He suddenly remembered Grandpa Cang’s appraisal, a lone wolf!

Li Qingshan was still shaking his head. He only wanted to learn archery so he could kill his enemies and protect himself. As for hunting, it wasn’t so necessary.

“Since he wants to go by himself then let him go by himself, we’ll see what he ends up catching.”

“I bet he won’t even be able to capture a rabbit.”

Li Qingshan smiled and stayed noncommittal.

Suddenly someone said in a cold elusive voice: “You’ve already eaten the village’s food for so long, now you don’t even agree to comply with the arrangements, are you really planning on continuing to gratuitously eat our food like that?”

Those day Li Qingshan’s every food and drink were all sent by someone under Sick Yellow Tiger’s orders. It also used up resources from the village. He took the food and still played around, so it would naturally lead to some dissatisfaction.

Sick Yellow Tiger immediately berated that man, “Qingshan is also someone from our village, how can you haggle over some

food.”

Li Qingshan expression quickly became stern. He cupped his hands and said: “Chief hunter, you don’t need to feel awkward. I, Li Qingshan, clearly distinguish grudges and gratitude. I will absolutely not take the slightest advantage from others in vain. I will certainly return double the food I consumed from the village during these days.”

“Qingshan, you don’t have to...” Sick Yellow Tiger was dead angry at the man who had spoken. I’m wholeheartedly trying to entice him to integrate in the village, but you bunch push him out instead for the sake of a few pounds of meat.

Li Qingshan had no plan of blending in anywhere. He didn’t have the need, and he also didn’t have the mood: “I heard there’s a competition each fall to see which hunter will hunt the most game, and the winner will even have some good luck. This year I might as well participate.”

Sick Yellow Tiger couldn’t convince him. Li Qingshan made some light preparations, and he went into the mountains with an ordinary hunting bow on his back under the mocking gazes of the crowd.

The hunters went to the northern mountains, but Li Qingshan didn’t want to mix in with them. To the west were the hundred thousand mountains. He already understood the mysteriousness of this world and was even more reluctant to take risks, but to the south was the Old White Peak, that land of dispute. Therefore he could only go east.

On the Old White Peak, a group of men wearing long swords and identical apparels had converged together.

The one leading them was precisely the young man who'd kill the ginseng gatherers that day and almost obtained the spirit ginseng.

“Look for it, no matter what you have to find this spirit ginseng, even if you have to turn this Old White Peak upside down!”

“Yes, young master!” The crowd agreed in one voice. They displayed their masterly movement techniques and forcibly swept through every corner of the Old White Peak.

Li Qingshan went deep inside the mountain forests. He didn't know how to distinguish the trails of birds and beasts, didn't know how to conceal his own tracks. He also didn't understand how to lay traps, and neither was he collaborating with other hunters. There wasn't even have a hunting hound with him.

If you said that this kind of person wanted to hunt, any hunter would laugh at you.

However he was calm and collected. He sat in meditation on a pile of wood in the middle of the mountain and only opened his eyes when dusk finally fell. He said with a smile: “Little An!”

A chilly wind swept across the forest, then after a moment it blew back to him.

Li Qingshan stood up and walked inside the forest. In a short while he found a deer fallen dead with no trace of scar on its body.

After Little An's strength had become more powerful, the gloomy chill in his body also became heavier. When he had discovered this deer he merely pounced on its body, and the deer immediately fell unconscious without knowing who from what, dropping dead on the ground.

Li Qingshan smiled: "Little An, with you here, I naturally don't need to waste time learning what art of the hunt. Since they look down on me, let us catch some preys and have them take a look at it."

Ever since the mid-autumn festival, Li Qingshan didn't let Little An so free and loose anymore, but instead exercised a little more control. At present he used him without the slightest modesty. One naturally didn't need so much courtesy with people one was intimate with.

Little An nodded excitedly and once again hurled himself inside the forest like a gust of wind.

Although the wild beasts of the mountain were alert, they had no way to be on the alert against this little ghost with no shape or shadow. They fell dead one after another, waiting for Li Qingshan to come collect them soon after.

Li Qingshan felt bored and started practicing his archery, firing

arrows at the alarmed birds of the forest. Shooting moving targets was indeed much more difficult, and out of three arrows two fell into thin air. But once he slowly started adapting, the number of arrows meeting air became increasingly fewer.

At dawn, in Horse Rein Village, some hunters came down the mountains carrying game, while a big group still jointly hunted on the mountains.

In an empty spot at the center of the village, the Grandpa Cang of high standing and reputation was responsible for inventorying the preys. His grim face also exposed a faint smile: "It's not a bad yield, that's a good omen." Then he let the women and children left behind to guard the village to handle the game, tan the leather and salt the meat.

"That Li Qingshan didn't come back yet?" Some people already couldn't wait anymore to have a laugh at Li Qingshan's expense.

"He went alone in the mountains to hunt, how could he come back so fast."

His voice hadn't even fallen when they heard someone call out: "Li Qingshan came back."

"What, what's that?" The several people looked at the direction the voice came from. What they first saw wasn't a man, but monster covered in a pile of shaggy hair, just like the savages from the legends.

Li Qingshan had his waist bent as he carried on his shoulders deer, elks and several other big quarries that were heavy enough to be worth several hundred pounds, while his hips were filled with wild rabbits and wild pheasants hanging on them. This hurried travel down the mountains had given even him a body soaked with sweat. His mouth said with difficulty: “Hey, Little An, isn’t that too much, it’s so heavy I’m going to die!”

Little An sat on top of the quarries and covered his mouth in a secret laugh. He took a look back. The east was faintly illuminated. Without waiting for the first beams of sunlight to sprinkle down, he drilled himself into the locust wood plaque.

Chapter 30: Pursuing A Tiger Across The Stream

With a “boom” Li Qingshan put down all his preys in front of Grandpa Cang: “This much should be enough to make up for the food I ate from the village, right!”

The serial sound of saliva being gulped down came from all around. Those hunters who had just come down from the mountain were even more stunned as they stared with big eyes and open mouths. They had a big group of men cooperating together with meticulous planning, but the game they captured unexpectedly wasn't even as much as Li Qingshan got by himself.

Grandpa Cang discovered that many corpse didn't show even a trace of injury: “How did you hunt them?”

This was the question everyone on the scene wanted to ask. Li Qingshan thought for a moment and answered with a smile: “I grabbed them with my hands!”

Everyone was about to fall and faint. They were even unable to continue asking their questions.

Li Qingshan took a glance at the game carried down by the hunters: “You also hunted so much, you almost caught up to me. No way, I have to try harder, otherwise won't I be unable to win.”

Grandpa Cang had no way to explain to him that those preys had

to be divided among every single hunter. Each hunter didn't even reach a single prey hunted on average. On the first day of the hunt, Li Qingshan's victory was already almost set in stone.

Li Qingshan ate a meal and immediately went back up the mountains.

Those hunters went back up the northern mountains with perturbed moods and explained what had happened inside the village.

“How's that possible?”

“You bunch must have gotten drunk in the village!”

They hurriedly defended themselves: “It's real, there really was this much game.”

“This kid!” Sick Yellow Tiger sighed out a long breath and shouted: “Everyone try harder, don't fall behind him. If all of us added together can't even match him by his lone self, we might as well all go slash our wrists!”

The hunters rumbled a loud pledge, their morale upsurging.

Sick Yellow Tiger secretly repressed a burst of coughs. When he looked at his palm there was a bright red patch of fresh blood.

A group of men and horses slowly traveled on a mountain path. In the middle was a small palanquin lifted by four porters, crowded around by a dozen family servants and guards.

A fat hand lifted the palanquin's curtain open, revealing a fat face that asked: "Adviser, how far is this place from Suncheer City?" It was clearly fall, yet he was dripping with sweat sitting inside the palanquin.

A man who looked like a butler said: "My lord, it's still far away. It'd be already nice if we could arrive tonight."

Lord Fatty let the curtain drop and mumbled to himself: "I devoted myself to great learning and statecraft, but they actually sent me to serve as the county magistrate in such a remote place. The lord prefect is really confused."

"My lord, we dare not say such nonsense, it would be bad if it spread to the prefect's ears."

Lord Fatty made two hmph hmph sounds and didn't talk any further.

At this time, the mountain wind suddenly rose and countless forest birds flew up in alarm.

"Awoooo!" A roar spread from the dense forest beside the mountain road.

The palanquin dropped to the ground with a “dong.” Lord Fatty’s eyes and mouth became crooked from the fall. “Wha, what’s the matter? Is someone plotting to murder this official?”

“My... my lord, it’s a ti... a tiger!” The adviser had fallen to the ground and his trembling finger pointed in front of him.

A gorgeous fierce tiger jumped down from the slope and dropped on the mountain road, glaring covetously at the palanquin. There was a “王” character on its forehead as it stood majestic and awe-inspiring.

“Huh, tiger, what, it’s a tiger! Some, someone quickly come, seize this animal!”

The adviser was almost about to cry: “They... they all ran away.”

Lord Fatty lifted the curtains and took a look. Indeed, the porters, servants, and guards around them had all cleanly scampered off double-quick. They had reacted as soon as the tiger roar had come. The bottom level working classes were still filled with vigilance and quick-wittedness.

Ancient people had such an idiom: “[to turn pale at the mention of a tiger](#).” For commoners of this era, there was no one who didn’t fear tigers. Fierce tigers eating people was also something that couldn’t be more common.

Chinese idiom figuratively meaning to be frightened at the mere mention of.

Lord Fatty said with emotion: “Adviser you’re really loyal, you didn’t betray this official’s thick affections!”

The adviser instinctively said: “Many thanks for the lord’s praise, even if this lowly self had to die with his body torn and his bones crushed, it still wouldn’t repay a thousandth of my lord’s grace.” while cursing in his heart: Fuck it, I... I don’t have the strength to move and leave!

“You first brace yourself, I’ll go save the soldiers!” Lord Fatty drilled out of the palanquin extremely quickly, planning on forcing his way through the road and escape.

The adviser quickly clung to Lord Fatty’s leg: “My lord, don’t leave this lowly self behind!”

The wild tiger’s eyes almost lit up when it saw this bunch of fat meat, and it was about to pounce when its ears suddenly pricked up. It shrank its body and faced the mountain forest.

The forest grasses and trees swayed, the rustles echoing closer and closer, the momentum even much greater than the wild tiger that had just appeared.

The adviser mumbled: “What, what’s this now?”

A silhouette leaped out from the mountain forest. This was a young man. His young face couldn’t be called handsome, but it was

filled with a soaring spirit as he deftly landed on the mountain path. He faced the ferocious tiger and grinned while baring his teeth: “That’s a rare good prey!”

The fierce tiger seemed to know that the newcomer wasn’t someone good to deal with. It made a threatening pose, baring its fangs and brandishing its claws, but it proved entirely useless. Its body quivered, and with a cry it fiercely pounced forward.

Li Qingshan set a foot firmly down and caught the two tiger claws with his hands. A tiger mouth filled to the brim with fangs neared him with a fishy gust of wind that rushed to his face. He shouted in a heavy voice. His true qi surged madly, filling his arms with explosive strength, and in one go he flipped the several hundred pounds tiger on the ground. Then he threw himself on the tiger and rode its back.

He never faced a tiger and had only read about Wu Song fighting a tiger in <Water Margin>, so he learned by example. He held on tight to the tiger’s back and threw random punches down.

The tiger suffered pain and roared madly. It fiercely bent his back as if it were bowing and sent Li Qingshan bouncing out in the air. Li Qingshan thought: “The reality is indeed different from what’s written inside books.” The true qi inside his body sank downward and he dropped steadily on the ground, about to contend cautiously with the tiger.

But that tiger took a look at him, made an “Awoo,” then turned around and fled.

Lord Fatty and the adviser had both been staring blankly at the scene, and only returned to their senses at this time, overjoyed at this unexpected turn.

“Young hero, brave warrior, this official is Suncheer City’s county magistrate. You drove away this tiger, this official will heavily reward you!”

But Li Qingshan didn’t even look at them and yelled loudly: “Where are you running off to!” He pursued in great strides like a meteor and grabbed the mace-like tail of the tiger. However the tiger tail was slippery and it wasn’t easy to get a hold of it.

How would Li Qingshan be willing to let go of this great prey in front of his eyes. He chased away after it.

Lord Fatty and the adviser only reacted to this astonishing turn of the situation after a long while. They looked at each other in dismay.

The autumn hunt concluded, and the Horse Rein Village was full of jubilant joy.

Li Qingshan also returned to the village. There were many additional scars on his body to the point of cutting a somewhat sorry figure, but everyone who looked at him exposed a reverent expression. It wasn’t because of his scars, but because of the prey on his shoulder.

His body was shouldering a ferocious adult tiger.

He had pursued this violent tiger for one day and one night inside the mountain forests, only persisting thanks to the endurance bestowed by the [Bull Demon Strong Fist]. He would have lost sight of the tiger's trail several times during the night if it weren't for Little An's help in tracking and chasing the beast.

Facing this king of the mountains, Little An couldn't go near it either. Ferocious tigers had an innate majesty that scared ghosts into submission, so much so that the elite tigers that had become tiger spirits could transform the men it had eaten into ghost followers.

The village's kids rushed around Li Qingshan. Their eyes were all filled with worship.

Sick Yellow Tiger came out himself to welcome him outside the gates, then decreed him first in the hunt. No one in the village dared to object. It wasn't only the case for ordinary people, tigers were also frightening wild beasts even for hunters. Ordinary hunting bows had absolutely no way to kill a tiger. It would merely excite the vicious nature of the tiger instead. And it was even more of a straight road to death if one expected to use a hunting knife to fight in close combat with a tiger.

Li Qingshan killed a tiger, and it was as if he had gained the tiger's prestige.

“I don’t have much worth any money, so this Stone Rending Bow will serve as the prize for this autumn hunt!” Sick Yellow Tiger took down the great bow from his back.

“Stone Rending Bow!”

Chapter 31: Stone Rending Bow

“Chief hunter, you absolutely can’t do this.” The other hunters hurriedly tried to discourage him.

Li Qingshan was also surprised inside. He actually wanted to give his own personal bow to him. The implication within didn’t stop at a mere bow, so he refused: “Chief hunter, a gentleman doesn’t seize someone else’s prized possession. I don’t dare accept this good fortune, just treat what I said as a joke!”

Sick Yellow Tiger lightly stroked the bow, as if talking to himself: “This Stone Rending Bow followed me for many years. It’s pretty easy to use, and it also helped me make a name for myself in the martial world. Now my time is limited, and I have to find a good owner for him.”

“I heard that you found Grandpa Cang’s bow too light. This is a steel bow, its strength is a full three stones, even ordinary martial artists can’t use it. Accept it, don’t dilly-dally.” Sick Yellow Tiger pushed the Stone Rending Bow toward Li Qingshan.

There was a heavy sensation in Li Qingshan’s palm when he held the Stone Rending Bow. He reminisced back to the day Sick Yellow Tiger stood on the boulder, and his elegant bearing as he killed men as if slaughtering dogs.

Indeed, this bow wasn’t really suitable for hunting, but more suitable for killing on the battlefield. It was a genuine weapon made to kill people.

His fingers fiddled with the bowstring. Metallic threads were mixed within and it was extremely sharp. Ordinary men could only use it if they wore finger rings, but with the Demon Bull Skin Refining, it wasn't an issue for him.

Sick Yellow Tiger's gesture carried the faint meaning of entrusting his orphan behind. Although he didn't say it clearly, it was something everyone present at the scene could see. But no one spoke up to oppose his decision. This wasn't only Sick Yellow Tiger's power and prestige; Li Qingshan had also proven his strength in front of everyone.

They needn't ask whether Li Qingshan had the ability to become their commander. Perhaps, whether the villagers were convinced or not, it was human instinct to submit to the mighty, just like for a herd of wolves. Horse Rein Village was precisely a wolf herd, and Sick Yellow Tiger wanted Li Qingshan to take over as the wolf king.

This was also a decision he came to after much thoughts and consideration. The feudal authorities usually didn't show any goodwill to Horse Rein Village, and on top of that they had a blood feud with the Ginseng King Village. They seemed majestic and awe-inspiring, but in truth danger lurked on every side. Although the village had outstanding talents, no one could seize control of the scene just by his presence. Only Li Qingshan was capable of this.

Li Qingshan felt as if in a dream as he held the Stone Rending Bow. A few months ago, he was still the most ordinary of villagers

in Crouching Bull Village, the most humble cowherd boy.

A few months later, he had the opportunity to become the dazzling and renowned chief hunter of the Horse Rein Village. However, he didn't accept: "Chief hunter, I will take this bow and thank you for your deep affections, but in fact today I came to say my farewells to you."

An uproar rose at those words. Everyone felt that Li Qingshan was too unappreciative of other's kindness. And even if Sick Yellow Tiger understood Li Qingshan's strength and potential, his expression was also a little ugly at being rejected in front of so many people.

"However, I won't take it free of charge." Li Qingshan returned to his house and took out a small wine bottle. He handed it over to Sick Yellow Tiger: "This is the medicinal wine my master left behind back then, perhaps it can cure your disease."

"You...are you saying the truth?" As it concerned the great matter of life and death, Sick Yellow Tiger was also a little excited. The others were in even more of an effervescence.

Li Qingshan faintly smiled as he said: "There's no harm in trying." This was precisely the spiritual wine soaked with the spirit ginseng. Although he didn't know the art of medicine, he still understood a little about Sick Yellow Tiger's illness. The latter was born with a weak body, and had exhausted all of his natural energy after many years of martial practice. He supported himself entirely through his inner strength.

This kind of disease was a terminal illness that any sage doctor of the dao of medicine would find difficult to treat. This was an innate injury, and no ginseng or lingzhi mushroom could be of remedy. But the spirit ginseng carried a little innate qi of nature within and could save his life.

Sick Yellow Tiger drank the spiritual wine down in one mouthful, then sat in meditation and operated his inner strength. In but a moment, shreds of white gas leaked out from the top of his head. His originally waxy yellow face also recovered a rosy ruddiness. He opened his eyes after a long moment.

“Chief hunter, how are you feeling?” The hunters inquired one after another.

Sick Yellow Tiger rubbed his chest with disbelief: “I feel much better.” Not only much better, it was simply unprecedentedly better, as if he had returned back to the time of his youth.

A burst of cheers echoed, and many hunters let out tears. Those who originally felt exclusion and some enmity toward Li Qingshan all changed their attitude. They held his hands and expressed a thousand thanks, unable to show all of their gratitude.

Li Qingshan lifted the Stone Rending Bow: “In that case, it’d be impolite of me to refuse this bow.”

Sick Yellow Tiger’s expression became slightly awkward: “About that... Qingshan... Could we change the prize...” Now that he’d

escaped from death, he suddenly couldn't bear to part with this "old partner."

"Don't think about it!" Li Qingshan interrupted him and refused: "For men of the mountains, the words they speak are also like mountains, how could they be so easily taken back."

"Fine then!" Sick Yellow Tiger's bitter face attracted a burst of guffaw from the others. It was extremely rare they could see their chief hunter with such an expression.

"Qingshan, after going away this time, will you come back?"

"I'm only going to Crouching Bull Village to take a look. I still have things there I need to properly pack up. I also have to find a secluded location and train my martial arts, see if I can achieve some breakthrough."

After drinking the spiritual wine during these days, Li Qingshan felt that he had already reached a critical stage of the <Bull Demon Strong Fist>. He was preparing to train alone and cultivate to the "strength of one bull." At that time, he wouldn't need be restrained to the mountain forests no longer, and could go take a look at the outside world.

He remembered that the fatty he saved yesterday seemed to call himself some Suncheer county magistrate. He wanted to achieve the pledge he made with Little An. Although he had no real idea how far away in the south was the place pointed by Little An, he still had to cross the first step.

“Going to breakthrough again?” Sick Yellow Tiger had long felt already that today’s Li Qingshan was again a little different compared to a few days ago. There was a great change in the appearance of his spirit, energy and essence. This pace of progress simply shocked the world and offended conventions.

But in the blink of an eye, he yet again said he wanted to break through once more. He couldn’t help remembering that Li Qingshan had once said he wanted to become an “innate master.” At that time he’d only smiled, but now he felt that maybe he could really do it.

“What about the game you hunted?” Li Qingshan’s yield during these few days could almost compare to the yield of the entire village.

“I don’t want any else, I just need this tiger’s tiger bones. Also, I’d like you to help me gather some tiger bones. I need to soak some medicinal wine, I’ll buy it at market price.”

The reason he chased that tiger without letting go wasn’t merely to look good in the village. The green bull had told him that when his <Bull Demon Strong Fist> reached the strength of one bull, he could start training the <Tiger Demon Bone Refining Fist>. He needed another kind of medicinal wine, and the most important core ingredient was the same as ginseng, precious but commonly seen. It was precisely tiger bones.

Hunters and tigers were mutually mortal enemies. Of course lone

hunters feared ferocious tigers, but when a tiger stirred too much noise, it would inevitably lead to a large-scale mountain search. They would set up many traps. Although wild beasts were ferocious, they eventually couldn't win against humans. The tiger bones accumulated inside Horse Rein Village shouldn't be few.

Sick Yellow Tiger said: "It's also a recipe left behind by your master?"

"That's right."

"Since you're generous, how could we men of Horse Rein Village be stingy? I can help you soak the medicinal wine, but is it possible to let us use the two recipes also?"

Sick Yellow Tiger had secretly used Li Qingshan's drug recipe, and the medicinal wine he made was indeed a lot better than the medicinal wine originally used in the village. Moreover there was absolutely no need to buy the ingredients from foreigners, their village could already gather them all. If they could use it to train their children, then in not too long, Horse Rein Village's strength could go up another level.

Li Qingshan didn't see why not, those two recipes were merely temporary things and there wasn't anything especially precious about them. There was no harm handing it to others, and it could save him the trouble of making the medicinal wine himself. This should also count as getting the best of both worlds.

He gave the prescription to Sick Yellow Tiger. Afterwards he

carried the Stone Rending Bow, sat across the green bull, and leisurely left.

When Li Qingshan's silhouette vanished behind the turn of the mountain road, Grandpa Cang quietly whispered to Sick Yellow Tiger: "Chief hunter, why didn't you keep him behind just now. There's eight chances out of ten that the spirit ginseng is on him. The wine you drank is most likely soaked from the spirit ginseng. The spirit ginseng is also most likely inside the gourd at his hip."

Li Qingshan never raised the matter of the spirit ginseng, but he'd exposed too many traces and clues in the eyes of this old hunter with a rich experience. Moreover, those things would only be even clearer for Sick Yellow Tiger who'd once journeyed across the martial world.

Sick Yellow Tiger looked at the mountain path Li Qingshan had disappeared from and stayed silent a long moment, before turning his head back: "When all's said and done, we're not the same as those ginseng gatherers, are we?"

"Yes, chief hunter!"

Chapter 32: Chance Meeting On A Narrow Path

Grandpa Cang also exposed a little reverent expression. Many mountain villages were the same as the Ginseng King Village. The hunter villages were even more so. After all, hunting people was a lot easier than hunting beasts, and when they encountered lone travelers, they could kill them in one arrow and take their things, it was really too easy.

Ever since Sick Yellow Tiger took the helm of the Horse Rein Village, he'd imposed harsh restrictions, and this kind of things never happened.

On the mountain path, the green bull said to Li Qingshan: "You gave away that bottle of spiritual wine, there's at least two people who saw through the matter about the spirit ginseng."

Li Qingshan said: "I know!"

"It's was very possible they'd suddenly act and make you stay forever in Horse Rein Village."

"I also know." Li Qingshan was someone of two worlds and wasn't a genuinely ignorant young man in his teens. He was already aware of the many dark sides of human nature.

"But I'm willing to take this risk. I have to live in this world. If I have to be always cautious, never trusting others, not trusting

myself, then where would be the fun even if I cultivated peerless supernatural skills?”

He already had some estimation about his own strength. He was confident he could kill his way out even in the worst case scenario. Moreover he had faith that his own strength could intimidate others.

“Warmly greeting each other in one hand, while secretly holding a sword in the other, does this count as becoming mature?”

Li Qingshan sighed a little in his heart. He gently stroked the locust wood plaque at his waist with the “South An” words engraved on it. In this world, there were however still people you could wholeheartedly trust, um, or rather ghosts.

They slowly traveled on the craggy mountain road. All along the way the mountain maples were as fire,

red yellow blue and green. It was very beautiful.

Li Qingshan took out a bamboo flute and started blowing it. The sound of the flute revolved loud and clear around the autumn mountains.

“Still can’t find it?” The young man called “young master” by the swordsmen asked with some restlessness. He’d already led men and searched the Old White Peak for many days. They even expanded the range of their searches, but they never saw the spirit

ginseng's shadow.

“Young master, we already led men and flattened the Ginseng King Village. The spirit ginseng is definitely not in Ginseng King Village. They said that it's certainly the Horse Rein Village that obtained it, should we flatten Horse Rein Village in passing.” A swordsman said.

“Hmph, they have big hatred with Horse Rein Village, of course they'd say that. They think I don't know that the Horse Rein Village already went down the mountain the day of the mid-autumn festival, and later they went to the northern mountains to hunt. Horse Rein Village isn't like this gang of bumpkins in Ginseng King Village. Sick Yellow Tiger's archery was also famous back in the days in the martial world. Before arriving at the last resort, don't go provoke him.”

Strong bows and powerful crossbows were things anyone in the martial worlds wouldn't dare look down on. In the confusion of arrow volleys, even first-grade masters would suffer.

“The young master is wise. It looks like we can only wait until the next night of full moon.”

The young master felt a little proud, but suddenly his ears pricked, “What's that sound?”

“Seems like a flute.”

“Flute? There’s only Ginseng King and Horse Rein those two villages around here. Let’s go take a look.”

The green bull suddenly stopped its steps. Li Qingshan could also see with his sharp vision more than ten human silhouettes stepping light as feather on treetops and rocks as they forced their way toward him. Each of them carried a treasure sword, their attitude incomparably confident and stylish.

“Is this a movement technique?” Li Qingshan exclaimed in admiration. He immediately thought about the man Little An told him about, and vigilance rose in his heart. But they were still some distance away from Old White Peak.

That young master was the first to arrive in front of Li Qingshan. The men under his command loudly praised him from behind: “Young master’s movement technique is marvelous!”

Li Qingshan saw that this young master had elegant facial features with red lips and white teeth. His face was filled with a haughty smile after being praised by his men. Apart from some calluses on the hand that used the sword, he had the look of a pampered son of noble descent.

He sized up this young master, but this young master never observed him and only gave him a light look: “Do you come from Horse Rein Village?”

Li Qingshan said: “Exactly. Your excellency is?”

“Are you also fit to ask our young master’s name?” A tall and lean swordsman with a green face saw Li Qingshan casually sitting on the bull, and the glint of a sword came out of its hole. An “[Immortal Points the Way](#)” move pierced toward his face: “Come down for me!” He was of a mind to scare him down the bull and shame him.

Name of a move mentioned in the novel “Journey to the West,” one of the four great Chinese classic novels along with “Water Margin,” “Romance of the Three Kingdoms,” and “Dreams of the Red Chamber”. Its main character, Sun Wukong the Monkey King, is a loose inspiration for Sangoku of DBZ’s fame, whose name is written the same.

Li Qingshan’s countenance chilled down. His stature slightly leaned to the side, waiting for the sword move to go past and finish. His eyes flashed with a spiritual light as he stretched his hand out at lightning speed and pinched the sword blade.

The tall and thin swordsman sneered in his heart: “You actually dare to hold my sword. This is a treasure sword made from fine steel by the sect, I only need to twist the sword blade to cut off this hand of yours.”

He used his strength to twist it, and not only he didn’t accomplish his desired outcome, but instead he wrung a fine steel treasure sword into something resembling a fried dough twist. The sword blade was pinched in Li Qingshan’s hand and didn’t move a single inch. The strength of his arm unexpectedly couldn’t match the strength from Li Qingshan’s few fingers.

Li Qingshan was greatly furious. They had no grudge and no

hatred with each other, but without a sentence he actually tried to disable him for life. Those people of the martial world were simply too malicious.

The treasure sword broke in two with a “Beng.” The thin and tall swordsman’s face became pale green. His sword was unexpected broken by a nobody kid, how could he endure this anger, so he was about to storm forward with his broken sword.

The young master chided him: “Chi Da, step back. Your skills are lacking, don’t lose any more face for our Dragon Sword Sect.”

“Yes, subordinate deserves to die, when we go back I’ll confess my sins to the punishment hall.” The tall and thin swordsman named Chi Da did not dare disobey and retreated back. He threw an incomparably poisonous stare at Li Qingshan.

The young master said with considerable interest: “I didn’t expect I could meet a master in those deep mountains. You actually have the qualifications to know this young master’s name. Listen carefully, I am Yang Jun of the Dragon Sword Sect.”

Li Qingshan shook his head: “Never heard of.”

“Savage country villagers are ignorant and inexperienced. Our Dragon Sword Sect’s swords can’t be casually broken by others. I won’t embarrass you, just leave a hand behind!”

“I’m not sure which hand you want?” Li Qingshan’s anger boiled

in his chest. He itched to kill Yang Jun in one slash. Originally in his imagination, martial practitioners would still have some upbringing even if they couldn't be chivalrous. Now it looked like he was greatly mistaken.

There was but a thin line between the virtues and evils of the human nature. When a man held the power to toy with the lives of others inside his palms, how many could maintain the so-called humanity and refuse to seize things by force or do whatever they pleased.

However, this group of people wasn't something the group of ginseng gatherers could be compared to, with their shallow martial arts. These were genuine martial practitioners. The Bull Demon Skin Refining could resist fists, but it couldn't block fine steel treasure swords filled with inner strength. Moreover, they were all pregnant with movement techniques, and even fleeing wouldn't be easy.

Yang Jun said: "I see that you're young but you already managed to cultivate your external martial art to such a degree. Your natural talents are satisfactory, it would be a pity if you were crippled just like this. How about you become my retainer instead!"

This was his genuine goal, because most of those who trained in external martial arts had straightforward and honest natures. They didn't have so many complex thoughts like those who cultivated inner strength. It was the so-called muscles growing into the brain. Therefore the retainers of many persons of high skill in the martial world were all external martial masters.

He'd always wanted to pose as a cultured man and recruit this kind of person. He was delighted when he saw Li Qingshan, wasn't this precisely what he was looking for? Now he was beating him down a little, and in the future he only needed to give him some sweet benefits to groom him into a loyal dog.

"Young master, you can't!" Chi Da hurriedly tried to dissuade him. If this kid truly became the young master's retainer, his status would rise like a boat lifted by the tide.

Yang Jun glared at him. He immediately did not dare say anything any longer.

Another swordsman said: "Why are you still not quickly agreeing. Suncheer City trembles before the might of our Dragon Sword Sect. It's not easy to become even a servant disciple, but now the young master is promoting you and letting you ascend to the sky in one step."

"My Li Qingshan won't be anyone's lackey!" Li Qingshan said with heavy emphasis on every word. He came from another world. He felt love hatred passion and animosity the same as people from this world, but there was one thing different about him. He had no devotion. He wouldn't be devoted to any person, no matter if that person were a grand benevolent noble or a frighteningly mighty man.

Perhaps he would pursue that person, would befriend that person, but he would absolutely not devote himself to him. Not

even mentioning Yang Jun, this kind of hedonistic second generation. Although he had no experience journeying the martial world, he could still see that Yang Jun's martial skills weren't outstanding among this group of people. It was only because of his status as a young master that people fawned at him

Chapter 33: Pinnacle Showdown

If it were a one versus one, Li Qingshan was confident that he could defeat Yang Jun within ten moves, or even kill him.

“Hmph, since you don’t want to drink a toast you’ll have to drink bitter wine!” Yang Jun was about to pass down the order to have Li Qingshan seized. Even if the Horse Rein Village wasn’t good to provoke, there was no fearing any news would leak out from those deep mountains after they destroyed the corpse and erased the evidence.

Li Qingshan’s whole body was taut. He planned to first take out their ringleader. Even at the risk of taking a sword, he’d capture Yang Jun first and see the rest later.

Suddenly someone said: “Little Master, it looks like that’s the Stone Rending Bow on his back.”

“What, Stone Rending Bow!” Yang Jun stopped his actions and took the measure of the great bow carried on Li Qingshan’s back. He had some understanding about this famous weapon of a famous character in Suncheer City’s surroundings: “Where did you get this bow?”

“Of course it’s a gift from the chief hunter.” Li Qingshan said.

There was a burst of uncertainty on Yang Jun’s face. He could hear and see things inside the sect. He knew everything he had to know. The one who could get this weapon was most likely Sick

Yellow Tiger's successor, the next generation chief hunter of the Horse Rein Village.

If such a person died, the Horse Rein Village would certainly not take things lying down. It wouldn't take much effort to learn of their activity in this region. If they wanted to risk all their strength in revenge, those hidden arrows and pit snares weren't good to deal with either. He couldn't stir up this kind of trouble just for the anger of a moment. He flung his hand: "Kid, don't let me run into you again."

In the blink of an eye, they were gone without a trace, and there was only Li Qingshan left by himself on the mountain path. Although he couldn't read minds, he could still guess that the other party was afraid of the Horse Rein Village's power.

When strangers saw you, what they saw was never your person itself, but your influence, your strength, your wealth. Though Li Qingshan achieved the level of a third-grad master, what he had relied on to escape from danger was the bow on his back.

He was filled with anger abreast as he silently said: "I'm not a man anymore if I can't take revenge for this hatred. I, Li Qingshan am absolutely not controlled by anyone, and absolutely don't survive thanks to someone else's reputation."

He originally didn't very much approve of the green bull's saying about "even trivial animosity must be taken revenge for." He felt that a real man should be a little bit more broad-minded. Now he realized that many great blood feuds were born from such trivialities, transforming into enmities that couldn't rest until

death.

Li Qingshan returned to Crouching Bull Village after an absence of more than a month. He heard sounds of activity inside his house before he even set foot in the door. “Could it be a thief? The place I live at is a little remote. I actually want to see which petty thief dares to come steal from me.” The rage in his chest hadn’t dissipated yet. He went inside in fast strides and grabbed that man. The man ate some pain and turned his head toward him.

Four eyes faced each others. The two men were both startled.

“Wealthy Li!”

“Second Son.”

“What are you doing in my house?”

“Second Son, you’re not dead?”

Li Qingshan watched the room. Although he went away for a month, it was still untainted by dust. He knew Wealthy Li didn’t come to steal things but to help him tidy the house.

“Of course I’m not dead, why do you say that?”

He only found things out after some inquiry. Originally, there wasn’t any news about Li Qingshan after he came back from Cedar

Creek Town. Some people from the village saw him get into a conflict with villagers from Horse Rein Village in the market, so they all said that every sign pointed to disaster.

Wealthy Li even burned some paper money for him and cried for a while.

Li Qingshan didn't know whether to cry or laugh: "Am I not still alive and kicking. The Horse Rein Village's chief hunter Yellow invited me to be a guest in their village, so I stayed a few days there."

Wealthy Li didn't think that he could survive even after going into the Horse Rein Village, this kind of dragon pond and tiger cave. As to those kind of words about chief hunter Yellow inviting him to be a guest, he didn't put too much faith in them. In his eyes, Li Qingshan was very fierce, but he was still far away if he were to compared with a character like Sick Yellow Tiger. He didn't know what he should be saying and only repeated over and over: "That's good then! That's good then!" It made Li Qingshan a little moved. Back then he didn't help the wrong person.

But Wealthy Li's face suddenly became anxious: "You better quickly leave, don't let the people in the village know."

"What's this now?"

"The eldest kid from the village chief's family came back, he said he was going to make trouble for you!"

“Dragon Li!”

Village Chief Li’s eldest son, also the elder brother of Panther Li and Tiger Li. Li Qingshan couldn’t be said to be unfamiliar with his name. On the contrary, the villagers talked on and on so much about him that he almost got ear calluses just listening about him.

Dragon Li wasn’t much older than him, but rumors had it that a noble took a fancy to him when he was a kid and playing outside, then took him to Suncheer City to learn martial arts. He only came back at the new year or during festivals. He’d met face to face with the cowherd boy Li Qingshan a few times, but they never even exchanged a word.

In the eyes of the villagers, this was a great person who went out of Crouching Bull Village to Suncheer City and made something of himself. If there was an unmarried maiden in any family, she would hope to be his fiancée. Together with Steward Liu’s son Little Steward Liu, they were named the “hero pair of Crouching Bull.”

Of course, now with Li Qingshan’s emergence, perhaps they should be called the “three heroes of Crouching Bull,” but Li Qingshan hadn’t seen the world, hadn’t gone to Suncheer City, so this “third hero” was a bit stretching it.

Li Qingshan said: “Am I afraid of him!” Not only not afraid, but on the contrary he had to go experience it for himself. He disregarded Wealthy Li’s dissuasion and pulled his legs toward Village Chief Li’s house.

Inside Village Chief Li's house, a young man with short one-inch long hair was lecturing Village Chief Li at this exact moment: "Anyone dares to bully over our heads, you're really more immature the longer you live." Then he pointed to Tiger Li and Panther Li: "You two great lordlings actually allow someone to bully to our door."

He had grown up almost entirely in Suncheer City, and the range of his experience was extremely rich. He also considered himself a Suncheer man, and at this moment he used the vision of a "city man" to look at the matters of the village. There was a kind of natural involuntary contempt, not only for Li Qingshan but for everything about the Crouching Bull Village.

He wasn't so young anymore but never took a wife. His family was also once anxious and search around to find him a partner, but there was only refusal hanging on his mouth. The present him was already not someone that a village girl could be matched to.

The Village Chief Li who was full of majesty inside the village was merely submissive at this time: "Don't be angry my son, anyway this kid is already dead."

"He provoked the Horse Rein Village, that's courting the road to his own death, it actually spares me the trouble of teaching him a lesson."

Tiger Li shrank his neck and had become a yes-man, but Panther Li actually said: "Big brother, you didn't let us enter the Iron Fist

Gate to learn martial arts, so of course we'll be bullied in the village."

Dragon Li glared at him: "That's because your qualifications aren't enough!"

At this time someone suddenly shouted outside: "Li Qingshan didn't die, Li Qingshan came back!"

Dragon Li fiercely stood up.

If one said this news set off great waves in the tranquil village, then what "Li Qingshan went off to Village Chief Li's house!" set off would be mad crazy swelling billows. It caused everyone in the village to move out and go watch this showdown at the pinnacle between the Crouching Bull Village's first hero and third hero.

Under the blazing sun, Li Qingshan and Dragon Li faced off four eyes looking into each others, while the villagers all held their breaths as if afraid of disturbing them.

Tiger Li and Panther Li stood beside Dragon Li to foster his momentum. Dragon Li waved his hand and made those two step back, "Li the Second, it's been a long while, you've already grown so big."

This was entirely the tone used by seniors toward later generations, but every villager thought he had this kind of qualifications. They whispered among themselves:

“This time the Second Son ran into big troubles.”

“Right, Dragon Li isn’t someone those Baldy Liu this kind of scoundrels and muckers can compare to.”

Li Qingshan didn’t answer this tone of voice. He observed that Dragon Li was tall and muscular with swelling arm muscles and bright eyes full of spirit. He radiated power just standing there. But his intuition told him that this man wasn’t as strong as Sick Yellow Tiger.

Chapter 34: Suncheer's Wulin

Even if Sick Yellow Tiger's body carried a disease, the sensation he gave off was that of a tiger whose bones were standing even if the body was dying. His might and aura didn't diminish and he was exceedingly dangerous. Moreover, the last time they exchanged blows, Sick Yellow Tiger had made a strategic mistake as he tried to meet force with force, using his weakest to face Li Qingshan's strongest, so of course he couldn't fish any advantage from it. Otherwise, even if he didn't use archery, as long as he had a weapon in hand he wouldn't have been defeated.

Dragon Li said: "I heard you were looking for me?"

Dragon Li also had a sharp vision and thought: "This Li the Second's posture is steady and unflustered. You can tell at first glance he practices martial arts. He doesn't look like an ordinary boor. Moreover the momentum on his body seems a bit similar to master's."

He immediately shook his head and found this association of his funny. What kind of character was his master, how could he put him on par with a small kid like this.

"You take advantage of me not being at home and actually dare to bully my family. You really don't know how the word death is written!"

"Oh, then I actually have to learn."

Li Qingshan's voice didn't fall yet that Dragon Li had rushed toward him with a great shout. With a "Iron Tree Pierces Through the Clouds" move, he bombed toward Li Qingshan's chest.

A burst of alarm rose from the surrounding crowd. Wealthy Li yelled: "Second Son be careful."

Li Qingshan's stature didn't move. Maybe he couldn't dodge or he was frightened stiff. There was scorn in Dragon Li's mind. Originally you were just putting on airs, I actually saw wrong just now.

There was a muffled "bang." The fist fell on Li Qingshan's chest. Li Qingshan relied on the Bull Demon Ground Stamp, and it was as if his feet had taken root inside the ground. He didn't move in the slightest: "Since we share the affection of people from the same village, I'll let have you throw three fists!"

Dragon Li was stunned silly. Although he only put three tenths of his strength in this punch, there was still no one among his apprentice brothers inside the sect who dared to take it straight on. Now it was taken face on by a no-name later generation kid. He heard Li Qingshan's words amidst his consternation and became even angrier. He actually dared to be so overconfident.

In the space of a wink, the second fist fired off with seven tenths of his power. He thought: this time you can't blame me for not showing mercy! The punch carried the ardent wind arisen from his fist and exploded on Li Qingshan's body.

Li Qingshan's stature quivered. He said: "You still haven't used all your strength right. Hurry up, last move."

Dragon Li looked at Li Qingshan as if he'd seen a ghost. But he didn't believe in those evils. He suddenly shouted explosively and operated the full strength of his whole body. The muscles of his arms bunched up as he abruptly sent out a straight fist that faintly seeped a greenish black color. It was indeed similar to black iron. He usually didn't dare to do this during fights, even if it were a struggle to the death, for fear of going overboard and exposing weaknesses. But now he couldn't care about anything else and gave all the strength he had as he fired this most powerful and most ferocious fist.

Li Qingshan stiffly received this fist, his stature swaying. He finally retreated a step, and his face also became red, his qi and blood rolling and rolling from head to toes: "This punch actually has some power. Three moves are gone, now it should be my turn." He raised his hand that became a fist.

["Iron Locks Across the River!"](#) The biting cold wind from the punch hit Dragon Li's face and he turned pale with fright. He crossed his arms and used the strongest defensive move of the Iron Fist Gate. Closely after, it seemed like a madly rushing bison had knocked into him, and the iron bridges were broken through by a torrential flood. He couldn't help his body being sent out flying. He was still in disbelief when he landed on the ground: "I actually lost in one move! How could he possibly have such a great strength!"

Dragon Li uses it as a technique's name, but it originally comes from the last stages of the Three Kingdoms era, when general Wu Yan from the country of Wu built iron ropes across the Yangtze

river after noticing pieces of wood floating down the river and guessing the country of Jin was building ships upriver to invade them. Later it became a Chinese idiom denoting a difficult if not desperate situation.

“The second fist!” A black shadow suddenly blocked the sunlight and hovered in front of his eyes. Li Qingshan had already come in front of him.

Dragon Li wanted to block, but his arms were so painful he couldn't lift them anymore.

Li Qingshan's fist traveled down and bombed on Dragon Li's stomach like a pile driver. Dragon Li's body bent like a bow as if he were a shrimp, and he puked a mouthful of sour water.

“The third fist!” He charged straight at Dragon Li's face.

The villagers cried in surprise, stupefied by this sudden and unforeseen turn of the events. The village's first hero Dragon Li they had talked about on and on for many years had unexpectedly been defeated in a short moment. Moreover he had lost so thoroughly.

The two brothers Tiger Li and Panther Li were even more in disbelief. The big brother they had always worshiped had actually collapsed at the first blow.

Village Chief Li shouted himself hoarse: “Show mercy!”

The wind from the punch hit his face, but there was no pain. Dragon Li slowly opened his eyes and discovered that Li Qingshan's fist had steadily stopped on his head. Only then did he realize that his whole body was covered in cold sweat.

At that instant right then, he felt as if he was facing his own master that he couldn't possibly match, while his lot was to merely close his eyes and wait for death.

Village Chief Li rushed to Li Qingshan's body, his thin and dried hands tightly gripping his arms: "Second Son, Second Son, for the sake of your departed father and mother, spare my little Dragon!"

"Dad, you go away, let him come at me!" Dragon Li struggled to stand up.

Li Qingshan said: "Since you have some filial piety, we'll note this fist down for the time being." He felt very satisfied with himself right now, not because he was proud of his strength, but because of his tactics.

Dragon Li had trained his martial arts for more than a dozen years, and it hadn't be in vain. His fighting experience was even more above Li Qingshan's. If they had really started to duel, the opposite side wouldn't fight force with force, so he would have needed to expend much efforts in order to obtain victory.

Hence he simply left him three punches. Defending this kind of punches happened to be what he most excelled at. Wherever

Dragon Li's fist fell, he focused his mind to that spot and the true qi inside his body also ran to that place.

After firing three fists, not only Dragon Li's morale had taken a hit, his endurance was also at his lowest, so he couldn't dodge Li Qingshan's fist in time and had no choice but to block it head on. The result of facing force with force was the sort of scene that happened just now.

Dragon Li stood up with the support from Tiger Li and Panther Li: "Are you really Li the Second? That's impossible!" He only had a very vague impression of Li Qingshan, apart from a somewhat reclusive nature. He wasn't any kind of important figure. And even in his father's descriptions, Li Qingshan was also merely a hot-blooded young man that been suddenly compelled into bursting out with all of his efforts. He had seen this kind things quite a few times. He never knew that he unexpectedly possessed this kind of martial arts.

This was like a mountain kid going out of his village. He works hard for many years, and finally earns some family properties, wins success and recognition. Then he returns to his village covered in glory and enjoys the worship of everyone there, but suddenly emerges an unremarkable country boy wealthier than he. The frustration and disappointment in his heart couldn't be any higher, and after the frustration came anger.

"I'm not Li the Second, I'm Li Qingshan!" Since he already refused to recognize that eldest brother of his, he didn't want to be any kind of what second son.

Dragon Li fiercely said: “Do you know who I am?”

“Of course I know!”

“Then do you know who my master is?”

“Who’s that?”

“He’s naturally the gate master of Suncheer City’s Iron Fist Gate. The Old Hero Liu, called Iron Lion by men of the martial world!” Said Steward Liu who suddenly stood out from within the crowd, speaking in an incomparably respectful and exalted tone.

Li Qingshan frowned: “Never heard of.” What Iron Fist Gate, Old Hero Liu, from the sounds of it it was all third-grade goods. He actually forgot that he was third-grade himself.

Dragon Li shouted: “Ignorant and inexperienced. You actually haven’t even heard of my master’s name, it looks like you haven’t heard either about the fame of the ‘Dragon Tiger Lion Bear’ four great Suncheer masters!”

“This ‘Dragon’ couldn’t be you right!” Li Qingshan stared. It was already the second time he’d been accused of being ignorant and inexperienced in the same day. He only knew that in the wuxia novels he’d read in his previous world, those who used animals as nicknames were all riff-raffs. All of them jackal wolf tiger panther were entirely useless.

Only those who used directions as nicknames were genuine masters, such as the Evil of the East, the Poison of the West, the Emperor of the South, or the [Beggar of the North](#).

Reference to the Five Absolutes Under Heaven, five great masters in the classic wuxia Condor trilogy by Jin Yong. The fifth one is called the “Divine of the Center.”

“Of course not.” Dragon Li was about to laugh in anger.

In Suncheer City, inside the county governmental offices, the adviser held a little booklet and followed behind Lord Fatty as he introduced one by one:

“My lord, apart from those few local gentry landowners, there are also four people from four places who can’t be offended.”

Lord Fatty irritably said: “Might as well say that I can’t afford to offend any single person in this Suncheer City!”

The adviser had no time to deal with his mood: “Those four places are one gate one sect one village one camp.”

“What’s called one gate one sect one village one camp?”

“Gate is for Iron Fist Gate, sect is for [Dragon Gate Sect](#), village is for Horse Rein Village, camp is for Black Wind Camp. Those “Dragon Tiger Lion Bear” four persons are the masters and leaders of those places. My lord, if you offend those country gentries you’ll be chased out of Suncheer City at most and won’t be able to keep

your county magistrate seat. But if you offend those people, maybe you will inexplicably lose your life.”

This is the same Dragon Sword Sect of young master Yang Jun’s fame seen before. The author decided to change the name or maybe he just forgot, happens often in those long serials.

Lord Fatty trembled all over: “Why’s this post so fearful to hold. Right, we never found the young man we met that day. This official can only sleep easy with that kind of bodyguard.”

Chapter 35: Alarming News And Black Wind

Originally that group of men on the mountain road were people from the Dragon Gate Sect, and that guy with his nostrils looking up at the sky was actually the Dragon Gate's young master. No wonder he was so arrogant and despotic.

Dragon Li said in surprise: "You know 'Sick Tiger'?" Then he inevitably also saw the bow on Li Qingshan's back. He couldn't conclude that this was the "Stone Rending Bow" because Sick Yellow Tiger very rarely went to Suncheer City.

Li Qingshan nodded and didn't say anything else.

Dragon Li said: "Could it be that this martial art of yours also was taught by hi..."

"It's not, you don't need to care about that. If you want revenge just come at me!" Li Qingshan didn't plan on pulling Sick Yellow Tiger's tiger hide to make a banner for himself, doing things like ["the fox exploiting the tiger's might."](#)

Chinese idiom, meaning to rely on connections to intimidate people. The author is doing his best to pull out all the tiger-related idioms...

Dragon Li's facial expression changed and he thought: "This Li Qingshan's martial art is already at the third-grade level, what kind of figure could his master be. On top of that he also has some relation with Sick Yellow Tiger. I only have a small dispute with him, what kind of benefit could I get be even if I were to kill him.

It's better to squash this enmity rather than keep it alive."

Dragon Li made up his mind. His countenance suddenly changed as a little smile appeared on his face, even if the smile was a little forced: "Second Son, we're fellow countrymen of the same village, what great blood grievance do we have that requires revenge."

Li Qingshan was actually a little stunned. He originally thought that the following development would be: hit the small fry and provoke the old master, then they swarm him and force him into a desperate impasse. After that he suddenly makes a breakthrough in his supernatural skill and explodes them all.

He didn't expect that Dragon Li would look so impulsive but was actually so fickle. Moreover his facial skin wasn't thin and he could unexpectedly turn his mouth around. This should also be regarded as experiencing the practical and greasy side of men from the martial world.

Dragon Li smiled and said: "Also, I exchanged three fists for two fists, that's a profit for me."

"I can still make you earn some more profit." Li Qingshan could see that the other side originally longed for retaliation, and only turned his thoughts around when he heard Sick Yellow Tiger's name. Thinking about it, it was already the second time today he got rid of troubles thanks to this. The mood in his inner heart was very complex.

He hoped that there would come a day when he himself could be

like this, could be the same as Sick Yellow Tiger. No, stronger than Sick Yellow Tiger. When someone heard his name, even if it were a thousand miles away, they would still feel deep awe and wouldn't dare take any rash arbitrary action.

Dragon Li smiled awkwardly: "That won't be needed. Don't just stand here, please come inside the house to talk. Since my Crouching Bull Village gave birth to such a young hero, I have to get a little closer to him." Then he hugged his fist to all four directions: "Fellow country elders, please go first. When there's time Dragon Li will come pay a call on each of you."

The villagers looked at each others. The conclusion of this matter really went beyond their expectations, but they didn't dare not obey since Dragon Li issued the notice to leave. They just silently gave the title of Crouching Bull Village's first hero to Li Qingshan inside their hearts.

Li Qingshan couldn't refuse the invitation since the opposite side had lowered his stance to such a degree. It was just as he said, they didn't have any extraordinary great death feud with each other. Moreover he also wanted to understand the situation in Suncheer City, especially about that Dragon Gate Sect.

Li Qingshan was invited inside Village Chief Li's house under the many reverent gazes. His mood was spry and relaxed, far away from the anxiety of going to the banquet at Steward Liu's. Seen by other people, he had a kind of arrogant and self-important aura. This was only a change in his state of mind and manners bought by his own power.

“Qinshan, your skills are so outstanding, do you have any thoughts about taking a commission in Suncheer City? Our Iron Fist Gate sincerely invites every hero under the sky to our doors. With your martial art, my master will certainly take a liking when he sees you.”

“I indeed have some martial learning, can I just be casually admitted inside the Iron Fist Gate?” Li Qingshan actually felt some admiration for this man’s broad-mindedness, but how could he know that Dragon Li also struggled inside. Although Li Qingshan hit him with two punches, they didn’t have any deep grudge or great hatred. If he could pull him into his faction, joining forces for mutual help and protection between people of the same village, it would be beneficial to his standing inside the sect.

“Of course you need a recommendation. Don’t worry, I can be your guarantor! My Iron Fist Gate is a big family with big industries, our influence isn’t limited to just Suncheer City. Our headquarters is set in Clear River prefecture. As long as your fist is hard enough and your merits high enough, you won’t have to worry about having enough space to develop. Women and silver will be even easier to get...”

Tiger Li and Panther Li all revealed an extremely envious expression. They blamed their big brother for not recommending them, so they couldn’t enjoy the city’s women and silver.

“That’s right, that’s right, my family’s Able Liu occupies the post of steward at Old Hero Liu’s mansion, when the time comes he can look after you.” Steward Liu had also followed them inside. He rejoiced he didn’t offend Li Qingshan too bitterly at that time.

Who could have thought that the cowherd boy from back then would become so powerful in a few trivial months.

As Dragon Li went on, Li Qingshan gradually understood that although the Iron Fist Gate opened shops and received disciples, they were closer to an influential faction entrenched in Suncheer City. That Iron Lion Old Hero Liu should be a faction leader or a branch gate master.

Li Qingshan said: “I’ll take the liberty to ask, in the martial world, which grade should Old Hero Liu’s martial arts count as?”

“Others might not be able to answer if you had asked them. My master has brought his iron fist to the point of perfection, he can be rated as a second-grade master.”

“Then how am I compared to him?”

“This...” Dragon Li hadn’t thought that Li Qingshan would compare himself to figures sitting at the top of Suncheer City as soon as he opened his mouth. Moreover it was with his master, so he felt some displeasure: “It’s not that I’m boasting, but Qingshan, although your martial skills are outstanding, you’re still only a peak character among third-grades. You’re still far away from being my master’s match.”

“Then what’s the difference between grades?”

“My master once said, a martial artist who’s only begun to touch

the door to martial arts can face three to five burly fellows, while a proficient fighter of the martial world can face three to five such beginner martial artists, and so on. Although it's not absolutely accurate, the rough outline is such. Once past this number, it'll be difficult to face the crowd with only your two fists."

"However, this is only talking about hard frontal assaults. If using guerilla ambush tactics, a first-grade master expert in movement skills can kill several dozen second-grade masters to the point of making them lose gall at the whisper of the news. But several dozen ordinary trained archers can also kill a first-grade master."

Li Qingshan roughly understood his own strength then. Those ginseng gatherers were precisely men who'd trained in martial arts, so at that time he was comparable to a proficient fighter of the martial world. That was why although he won, it had still been a miserable victory.

Afterwards, he barely reached the level of a third-grade master after some cultivation, and he only became a genuine third-grade master after drinking the spiritual wine. Dragon Li's martial skills were enough to be called a proficient fighter but not yet a master, that was why he absolutely wasn't a match for him.

"Apologies, I already promised Horse Rein Village's chief hunter Yellow to join the Horse Rein Village, so I'm afraid it won't be possible to comply with your invitation." He couldn't help thinking that a few months ago he couldn't even rest easy sleeping in the bullpen. He was viewed as a thorn to the sides of his brother and sister-in-law, and they had thought up every possible way to

chase him out. But now everyone tried to invite him.

Dragon Li thought “indeed” to himself, and said in regret: “Horse Rein Village, there’s not much profit to be gotten at that place. To speak of the four places of Suncheer City, it’s still more comfortable to join our Iron Fist Gate. They’re all nested inside the mountains, how could it compare to our nearness to this bustling world. Alright then, whenever you change your mind, come to Suncheer City and find me in the Iron Fist Gate as far as possible. Just tell them my name.”

Li Qingshan couldn’t refrain his smile. Indeed, not many journeyed the martial world for the sake of chivalry. He asked again about other information, and Dragon Li answered whatever he knew. Li Qingshan saw that the other side was so straightforward and not someone lacking in tact, so he became a little more respectful: “Brother Li, today’s neither the new year or a festival, why would you come back to the village?”

Dragon Li suddenly lowered his voice: “Even if you didn’t ask I would have told you. I came back this time for a great matter threatening Crouching Bull Village. It’s possible the Black Wind Camp will target Crouching Bull Village as the goal for their looting.”

Apart from Li Qingshan, the expression of everyone inside the room changed in a split second.

Chapter 36: You All Have To Die

Steward Liu stammered as he said: “Impo...ssible, the Black Wind Camp is very far from us, they never came here before...” His was the greatest household inside the village, the first door the Black Wind Camp would be knocking at would be precisely his.

“I heard that those villages close to the Black Wind Camp all strengthened their defenses and built perimeter walls. That’s why they gave up looking near them and searched farther away. Now that winter’s coming, they also need to stock up on food to live through the winter. Steward Liu, those few grain depots of yours are all full right!”

“Don’t tell me the government will just turn a blind eye?” Li Qingshan only learned then that even mountain bandits had a saying about “autumn hunt.” For hunters, fall was the season the wild beasts were at their plumpest, while for mountain bandits, the ordinary people who’d just harvest the fruits of their toils during fall were also at their plumpest.

“Hmph, the government office collects their money year after year, then they say they’ll send armed forces to suppress the bandits, but they end up doing nothing year after year.”

Steward Liu said: “Then... then what should we do? Worthy nephew, why didn’t you take back some men with you?”

Dragon Li flicked a bad-tempered glance his way. How was he unwilling to take people back to the village. However he was but

one disciple among many in the sect, not the Iron Fist Gate's master. His apprentice brothers were good when it came to eating and drinking together, but it was absolutely impossible to have them go face to face with the mountain bandits of Black Wind Camp.

That said, back in the days it was thanks to Steward Liu that he'd managed to become the Iron Lion's disciple, so he couldn't lash out and reprimand him on the face of this old affection. He only said:

"I alone will be amply sufficient. This time the Black Wind camp master will certainly not come himself, most likely it'll be one of the bandit bosses. As long as I report my master's name, they'll also need to give some face. However, we also need some people to put up a front. Qingshan..." Dragon Li looked hopefully at Li Qingshan. He would feel a little more confident with such a master at his side.

Li Qingshan was a little doubtful about his words. The others came from so far away, would they really retreat after merely hearing a name. But either way he wouldn't let someone trample over this little village that'd birthed him and raised him. He cupped his fist and said: "Justice doesn't allow for refusal."

Dragon Li felt reassured as he obtained his commitment. With the help of a third-grade master, he had a much greater grasp about this matter. This was also an exceedingly crucial reason why he had accommodated Li Qingshan to such a degree.

Village Chief Li and Steward Liu organized some workers and servants to make preparations, also gathering some weapons.

Although the news had yet to leak out, the atmosphere tensed up nevertheless.

Steward Liu said falteringly: “Worthy nephew, do we need to run away?”

Dragon Li said: “There’s no need for that, they came to loot, they won’t commit murder or arson for no reason. Only, Steward Liu, you probably will have to bleed a little this time.”

Steward Liu let out a long sigh. What must be must be. He could leave, but his family properties couldn’t leave.

Those few people waited quietly inside the house. The two brothers Tiger Li and Panther Li held sword and spear yet were so afraid their sweat couldn’t stop flowing down. They kept reminiscing about such and such fearful rumor about the Black Wind mountain.

Dragon Li looked at his own two brothers, then looked at Li Qingshan who was resting with his eyes closed without a single change in his demeanor. He sighed in his heart. If you had half his guts, I’d be willing to take you to Suncheer City.

“Clang clang clang clang!”

The sky wasn’t yet dark when the sound of a gong suddenly echoed outside the village. This was a sentry arranged outside, a nimble young man with keen eyes and sharp ears picked by

Steward Liu.

Dragon Li said: “They came!”

Li Qingshan suddenly opened his eyes. This group of mountain bandits had big guts, they actually dared to plunder in broad daylight.

The sound of the gong suddenly stopped.

The few men hurried to the entrance of the village. They saw a cloud of dust heading their way from afar, and in the wink of an eye it was in front of them. There were several dozen people, whether tall, short, fat or thin, and each of them had a face filled with evil countenance. Their leader rode a short horse that could travel the mountain roads, and his hand unexpectedly carried a human head dripping with blood.

“Little Six!” Steward Liu cried out. This human head was precisely from the young man he had sent out as a scout. He was unexpectedly killed just like this. Steward Liu was so scared his calves became soft as he looked at Dragon Li. Didn’t you say they wouldn’t murder for no reason?

Dragon Li’s eyebrows knotted together at the middle and he said in a low voice: “They’re trying to establish their might by killing someone!” Then he hugged his fist and said in a clear voice: “This one is Iron Fist Gate’s Dragon Li, which boss from Black Wind Camp has presently come?”

“This is our third boss. Tactfully pay out your money and food, spare your grandfathers some efforts, otherwise we’ll burn this broken village of yours!” A mountain bandit yelled those words, then other mountain bandits followed suit and shouted while fiddling with the weapons in their hands. Their faces all had a contemptuous smile, as if they were merely looking at a herd of lambs waiting to be slaughtered.

The third leader had grown a full beard on his ferocious-looking face. He threw the human head on the ground, and it rolled at Dragon Li’s feet: “Iron Fist Gate. If the Iron Lion were here, I’d immediately leave without saying a word, but what kind of thing are you?”

Tiger Li and Panther Li had been scared until their faces became the color of dirt and their legs were trembling when they saw the dusty cloud come to them. Their legs became even softer at this time and they fell sitting on the ground.

The mountain bandits laughed loudly: “The third leader is really awe-inspiring!”

Dragon Li’s expression had suddenly changed. He gasped a mouthful of cool air in alarm. Rumors had it that among the bosses of the Black Wind Camp, the one numbered third had the most cruel and most savage nature. He was moody and temperamental, and when looting there was nothing he wouldn’t do. In the eyes of the villagers around the Black Wind Camp, he was a figure even more frightening than the Black Wind Camp’s master.

But since the opposite side had asked him what kind of thing he

was, it proved that he was still somewhat afraid of the Iron Fist Gate, hence asking his relation with the Iron Lion. Circumstances were stronger than men, so he could only endure the anger in his chest: “I am my old master’s last disciple. I knew that the third boss was coming and didn’t dare let you return empty handed, so I prepared a humble gift. I’d like your honored self to spare Crouching Bull Village for my master’s sake.”

Steward Liu trembled when he presented an embroidered box. The third boss’ horsewhip pulled and rolled, then the embroidered box flew into his hand, showing that his martial arts weren’t weak.

He opened the box. Inside was shining white silver, but his expression gradually sank down instead: “One hundred taels, are you a beggar?”

“Great..great king, we’ve already done our best.”

“Before the sky darkens, I want to see one thousand taels of silver and one thousand pounds of grains. Otherwise, hmph hmph!” Saying there, the third leader suddenly licked his lips and smiled obscenely: “My brothers also need to borrow a few women to use for a bit. Don’t worry, this isn’t robbing, just borrowing. When we’re done using them we’ll return them to you as soon as next spring comes.”

The mountain bandits laughed lewdly together, “If some women can become our third boss’ wives, it’ll be their good fortunes.” “When spring comes, maybe the women won’t want to go back anymore!”

Dragon Li understood the most clearly that no women returned from the Black Wind mountain camp. They were all insulted and raped to death. He said in a loud voice: “Does the third leader truly not give any consideration for the Iron Fist Gate?”

Steward Liu was even more stunned by the numbers, and he stared blankly, unable to say a word.

“Don’t make me wait too long!” The third leader didn’t even look at Dragon Li. He whipped his head around and ordered: “You guys go hurry them up!”

More than twenty men giggled as they passed by Dragon Li and the others. They went into the village and knocked from door to door. If they didn’t dare open the door, the door would just be broken before the bandits went in. Over a hundred villagers were herded out, just like how sheep were herded, assembling together with faces filled with fright. The barks of dogs and howling sounds of women and children crying rose in an instant.

The third boss watched this scene with a great laugh: “We’ll just rest in this village tonight!”

“This kid was only fourteen. He’d never done a single bad thing growing to this age.”

An extremely quiet voice suddenly sounded, so calm it seemed a little out of place in the present situation. But within that quiet was repressed a seemingly uncontrollable urge to kill.

Li Qingshan held Little Six's head up from the ground and hugged it, gently stroking the eyes closed.

The third boss narrowed his eyes: "Who are you?" He hadn't taken notice of Li Qingshan, because from the start when he'd tossed the head down, Li Qingshan had his head down and kept quivering from head to toes. He had thought it was from fear.

But the present Li Qingshan wasn't trembling anymore, and spoke slowly: "This was a very good and a very clever child, his father and mother both cherished him very much."

The third boss yawned: "What do you want to say?"

Li Qingshan suddenly lifted his head: "Today, you all have to die!"

Chapter 37: Words Spoken Must Be Fulfilled

The mountain bandits laughed out loud, as if they had heard an extremely funny joke. But the third boss sensed something fearsome from Li Qingshan's body and didn't make any laughing sound.

A human head falling down, a fully pulled bowstring.

"Die!" Li Qingshan acted in the space of an instant. The bellow coming from his mouth couldn't cover the metallic cry of the quivering bowstring. The arrow carried his sky-vast fury as it fired toward the third boss.

A beam of dark light pierced through. A gigantic strength carried the third boss with it and lifted him to some height before heavily falling down.

A bow with the strength of three stones had astonishing power. Li Qingshan movements had flowed smoothly. Within such a short distance, only a second-grade master or higher could possibly dodge the arrow, which the third boss obviously wasn't.

The noisy village quieted down in a flash. The mountain bandits opened their eyes wide one and all, unable to believe the scene in front of them. The glorified third boss had unexpectedly been killed by a half-grown little kid.

The villagers looked at him as if they were watching a god. For them, these mountain bandits were fearsome evil demons, even

more so for the third boss who was the evil demon commander. Now Li Qingshan who'd killed the third boss in one hit was truly like a god.

The situation had reverted itself, but there was no joy on Dragon Li's face, only alarm.

"Third boss! Third boss!" Several mountain bandits circled around the third boss. The third boss coughed a mouthful of fresh blood, and pointed at Li Qingshan with a face full of fierceness: "Kill him!"

He could also amount to a third-grade master, and he had reacted in a split second. Although he couldn't dodge that arrow, he'd avoided being hit in a vital spot. The arrow had pierced through his right armpit, the surrounding bones all ground into dust; his right hand could be said to be wasted. His eyes were bloodshot, and he wished nothing better than to swallow Li Qingshan raw.

The mountain bandits started to react, holding their various weapons as they charged roaring toward Li Qingshan.

A strong wind came from behind his head. A short javelin stabbed toward the back of his head. He didn't turn his head and merely leaned it slightly to the side. He clutched the javelin in his hand, then turned around and threw it. The javelin flew back with a fierce speed ten times faster than before, and nailed the bandit who'd sneak-attacked him to a door.

A double-crescent halberd, a goose-feather saber, and a red-

tasseled spear all stabbed at him at the same time.

Li Qingshan grasped the spear and halberd. He forcefully pulled on them, and the two mountain bandits lost balance, falling to the ground full of fear. A pair of steel arms were waiting for them. The steel fists hit their chests. Two muffled sounds could be heard, then the two bandits flew out at the same time while puking blood.

Taking advantage of this opportunity, the goose-tail saber stabbed into Li Qingshan's bosom. The freezing cold saber blade came into contact with his lower abdomen. It looked as if Li Qingshan was soon going to be run through, but it couldn't move an inch deeper.

Li Qingshan's two iron palms slapped together on the head of the bandit holding the saber, with the power of an ear-piercing gale. When he let his hands fall, the mountain bandit dropped to the ground as if he had lost his soul, fresh blood slowly seeping out of all his facial orifices.

He walked in great strides toward the third boss. The sound of his man-killing power was already deafening to the ears. He poked with his tiptoe, hooked the great halberd up, and grasped it in his hand.

There was no style, there was no qualms, there was only one sweep.

A mad gale lifted a half-circular smoke of dust that rushed toward the mountain bandits.

The halberd tip broke apart, spun in the air, and stabbed into the ground.

Several weapons flew up, followed by a series of blood-curling shrieks. Some people attempted to parry, but they couldn't block the halberd's strength that could sweep through a thousand soldiers.

The cloud of dust dispersed. Four mountain bandits were sprawled on the ground. A short bandit had been swept through the face and died on the spot. The other three mountain bandits all had their chests split open and suddenly gained a new-found hobby for screaming miserably on the ground. Fresh blood splashed on the ground as if it were free of charge, the garish color overflowing everywhere.

Li Qingshan took a glance at the cracked halberd, and thought what a poor weapon as he threw it away. He wasn't aware of just how many steels and bones he'd forcibly swept through just then. How could ordinary weapons withstand such use.

In the turn of an eye, eight mountain bandits had fallen dead or been grievously injured. The bandits behind them cried out in fear and stopped their steps, holding their weapons but not daring to move forward. They were stupefied by the bitter scene of this instant outburst. This originally ordinary young man had seemingly transformed into a fearful god of death within the space of an instant.

Li Qingshan continued to walk toward the third boss without any expression on his face. His eyes twinkled with a red light that he hadn't yet discovered himself.

His brain was analyzing and judging at high speed. He hadn't let his anger rush to his head. There was only the third boss among them who could count as a third-grade master, so he damaged him first as soon as he started acting, as to remove the greatest threat.

There were a few proficient fighters among the other bandits, but most of them were at the ginseng gatherers' level. They'd trained some martial arts that were largely enough to bully the common people with, but they were absolutely no match for him.

"I'm... I'm going die here!" The third boss supported his body as he shifted backward, watching the incoming Li Qingshan with a face full of dread, as if he were one of those monster demons in human form from the legends who suddenly transformed back with one shake of the body and exposed their malevolent fangs. No matter how many people he had around him, it couldn't insure his security.

"If I die, this whole Crouching Bull Village will be buried. Do you know who my big brother is?"

Dragon Li's face was even uglier as he went forward and grabbed Li Qingshan: "Qingshan, don't be reckless!"

The third boss took advantage of this opportunity to climb on the horse, take command of the reins, and spur the horse to speed out

as fast as possible. The other bandits didn't need him to say anything and swarmed behind as they followed, not even caring about the wounded bandits.

Li Qingshan freed himself from the hold and tightly clutched Dragon Li's throat, lifting him up: "Do you also want to die?"

Dragon Li said with difficulty: "Can't... can't kill the Black Wind Camp's bosses, have you heard of Elmunder Village?"

"Elmunder Village!" Steward Liu was flopped to the ground, half-frightened to death, and he suddenly cried in fear involuntarily as he heard.

"What Elmunder Village!" Li Qingshan eased the strength of his hand.

"Elmunder Village also had the custom of learning martial arts. Theirs folks were swift and fierce, and they once killed a boss from the Black Wind Camp. But not long after, the Black Wind camp master personally led five bosses and cleanly killed the hundred or so villagers, no matter men or women, elders or children. The Black Wind camp master personally took each of the bosses and used the corpses piled into a hill as sacrifices for their departed brother. Do you want this kind of devastation to happen to Crouching Bull Village?"

Li Qingshan thundered in a low voice: "Then we have to allow them to trample and humiliate us?"

“Qingshan, I know what you’re feeling, but circumstances are stronger than men.”

“Then I’ll be even stronger!”

The expression of every villager had changed. At this time, they heard incomparably poisonous words left far away by the third boss: “You Crouching Bull Village just wait for your whole village to be massacred!” Some people were so scared they fell sitting on the ground, and wailing cries of fear echoed once again, without the slightest joy at repelling the mountain bandits.

A wounded bandit clutched his chest while exposing a cruel smile: “You’ll all be buried together with me!”

Li Qingshan said: “Are you done talking?”

“What?”

Li Qingshan let go of Dragon Li and kicked the goose-feather saber beside his feet. The saber’s blade pierced the bandit’s throat, immediately extracting his last breath. “The words I speak, I won’t go back on them.” Li Qingshan took the lives of the other mountain bandits one by one, then turned back to the villagers and said: “Nothing will happen, I swear!” Then without turning his head back he pursued in great strides in the direction the mountain bandits had escaped to.

The setting sun fell to the west. The last of the twilight faded

away below the horizon. Darkness descended over the mountains and the earth.

Beside a raging bonfire, two bandits were helping to extract the arrow from the third boss. The third boss cried in pain and hit a bandit down with one slap: “Can’t you motherfucking do it a little gentler?”

That bandit had a mouthful of fresh blood from the blow. He falteringly mumbled something and didn’t dare talk back.

The other mountain bandits were all crestfallen. With the fame and glory of the Black Wind Camp, how long had it been since they last experienced such a failure. They were already used to gazes filled with dread and flattery, used to take women and silver whenever they pleased.

“You all fucking chin up for this father. We’ll definitely take revenge for this hatred, wait until we catch that kid...” The third boss exposed a cruel smile.

A mountain bandit immediately echoed him: “We’ll hack him into a thousand pieces!”

“No, we’ll boil him alive, we’ll all get a share of his meat, the taste must surely...” The bandit who wished to eat Li Qingshan’s flesh didn’t even finish talking when a bloody mark appeared on his throat. Fresh blood spurted out, interrupting the mountain bandits’ discussion about torture

Chapter 38: Kill To The Last

“Who, who did this?” The third boss roared loudly. Although he was injured, he still had his martial arts. Who was it who could kill someone under the numerous staring eyes.

“Puff.” Another mountain bandit fell down with his throat cut open. It was the first one to echo the third boss earlier, the one who said to cut Li Qingshan in a thousand pieces.

The dark forest seemed to be hiding a fearsome devil. A terrifying shadow shrouded around the mountain bandits in an instant. No one had clearly seen who it was that did it? How did they do it? They were even more ignorant whether the next one to die would be themselves. This kind of unknown fear was the most terrible kind.

The third and fourth bandits fell down amidst this panic, as if Death’s sickle was silently reaping their lives.

The night wind was chilly. A delicate hunting knife traveled among the tall grasses like a poisonous snake, its blade covered in dark grass juices and not reflecting any light.

Tonight, there was no moon.

Li Qingshan stood on a mountain slope inside the dark dense forest and watched all of this. Only he could see Little An hold the hunting knife and linger among the mountain bandits, his expression filled with incomparable anger.

The words of those bandits had already thoroughly infuriated him. His mind that had been numb and withered for a long time emitted such intense emotions for the first time. He wanted to kill all those people.

Li Qingshan saw Little An try several times to go near the third boss, but he was blocked each and every time. The blood and energy of a third-grade master were already extremely exuberant, exercising restraint on ghosts. The reason Little An could go near him at all was because he had used his body's life energy to nourish him every day.

“Ah!” “Ah!” Two screams, then two mountain bandits losing their lives. The third boss wasn't a waste and bellowed: “Everyone gather here, lean against each others!” Every mountain bandits tightly gathered beside him, safeguarding his safety first.

Many lifebloods and life energies gathered together like a gigantic blaze. Little An couldn't approach anymore.

Li Qingshan drank a mouthful of spiritual wine from the gourd. Speed wasn't the <Bull Demon Strong Fist>'s forte, and there wasn't any so-called movement technique therein either. He had relied on his bull-like tenacity and the replenishment from the spiritual wine to forcibly catch up.

He refilled his yuan qi, lifted the Stone Rending Bow. Now, it's my turn!

A “peng” shook the pitch darkness of the night. One could tell just from the sound that this was the explosion from an extremely powerful bowstring. It was clear and fleeting, carrying with it a keen strength that cut through the air.

The feather arrow attacked from the faraway darkness with a shrill whistle, perforating a bandit’s chest, then burrowed itself into the body of another bandit behind the first one. Two birds one arrow!

The bandits had already been pierced through when they heard the sound of the bowstring. The group of mountain bandits had also gone through quite a few battles, but not one of them could actually react in time. The third boss understood that the arrow had traveled even faster than sound. The archer was an expert in this field. In the whole of Suncheer, there was almost only one man and one bow who could fire out such arrows.

No, it wasn’t that man, otherwise he’d be dead already! The third boss glanced at his injured right shoulder and remembered the kid who’d forced him into such a situation. He originally believed that it was because of his own carelessness that he fell prey to a surprise attack, but he didn’t expect this kid’s archery would be so fearful.

In fact, Li Qingshan’s archery still couldn’t be said to be particularly accurate. Moreover he was suddenly using such a heavy bow like the Stone Rending Bow, and the distance between them was also so far away. But the mountain bandits were bunched together, so he had absolute no need to take the trouble to aim. He just needed to fire at the center, there was no reason it wouldn’t hit something.

“Third boss, it’s the kid from earlier, he caught up to us.”

“He... he wants to kill us to the last one!”

“From what direction did the arrow come, we’ll go all out with him!”

“No, we can’t, once we’re separated...”

The second arrow pierced through a bandit’s chest while they were debating. Every bandit’s face was twisted by dread, panicking like a herd of lambs waiting for slaughter.

The third boss ordered: “It’s that kid’s little tricks. Let’s rush together and kill him!” He led the mountain bandits and charged up the mountain while shouting murder.

Li Qingshan stood in his original spot without any apprehension as he fired arrow after arrow.

A feather arrow was catapulted out by a taut bowstring and spun inside the darkness, plunging into a bandit’s body, once again piercing through layers and layers of flesh. It only reluctantly stopped its spin after being stuck between bones.

The feather arrow’s giant pounding power didn’t even leave any time for the bandit to scream. Another bandit stopped his footsteps

beside and watched with horror. His stricken look hadn't vanished yet that he felt a sharp pain in his head, and then he didn't know anything after that.

The interval between each arrow was unexpectedly short to such an extent. The power of the bandits' dash was suddenly broken as they hurriedly searched for cover to hide behind. But they didn't have time yet to sigh in relief that those weird blood marks once again befell upon their throats. It was far more accurate and terrifying than the sharp arrows.

Someone died every time. The morale that had been boosted by their terror suddenly leaked empty. They only discovered after coming back to their senses that the third boss had already ridden on the horse and was fast galloping toward the Black Wind Camp. They immediately scattered like birds and beasts.

Li Qingshan put the Stone Rending Bow on his back, feeling a faint ache in his arms. The strength of this Stone Rending Bow was indeed no small matter. He already had trouble enduring after firing a dozen arrows. He deeply inspired a mouthful of air and drank another mouthful of wine.

“Little An, we're chasing them!”

Inside the Crouching Bull Village, the villagers were still restless with anxiety. Dragon Li was in the middle of commanding people to gather the corpses.

“Little Dragon, how did things become this way?” And old and

august voice came from the darkness.

Dragon Li's body shook: "Master, how did you come!" It was precisely the Iron Fist gate master renowned over all of Suncheer City, Iron Lion Liu Hong.

"I was afraid you couldn't subjugate that group of bandits, so I came to take a look." Liu Hong walked out of the darkness. His eyes were like rings, full of majesty. He wore a large flowery robe, and his presence was awe-inspiring like a mighty lion. He glanced at the bandits' corpses: "We fell out with the Black Wind Camp... Eh, you're not the one who did this, what a heavy strength. Do tell, what's this about?"

Dragon Li had no choice but to narrate things in details. Liu Hong snorted when he heard about the third boss' actions and conduct: "They actually dare not to put the Iron Fist Gate and this old fellow in their eyes. If this old fellow were here, I would certainly execute him in person and see if that bear dares to make faces at me."

When he heard the process of Li Qingshan's actions, he gave out a praise: "How daring, what good means. How old did you say this Li Qingshan was?"

"He's probably fifteen years old." Dragon Li was a little surprised himself. He only remembered that Li Qingshan was merely a youngster when those words left his mouth.

"What, only fifteen years old!" Liu Hong was astonished. He was

an old hand of the martial world. Don't mention a fifteen or sixteen years old third-grade master, he'd seen even first-grade masters. But behind the backs of those young heroes, weren't there the shadows of great clans or great sects. There would be a master with unmatched martial arts at the very least.

Without a good master's teachings, even with a genius piercing through the heavens you still wouldn't go anywhere, "You were right to reconcile with him. This Li Qingshan could be a disciple raised by someone extraordinary from the martial world. Let's go, we'll follow them and take a look."

Chapter 39: The Way Of Demons

Dragon Li pointed the direction and Liu Hong traveled in great strides. The Iron Fist Gate didn't put emphasis on movement techniques, but each of his steps could cross the distance of seven to eight steps from ordinary people. His sleeves floated and his speed wasn't slow in the least. In not of a long time they came to the place where the Black Wind bandits had halted and built a bonfire. There were only some corpses left there. Wild wolves were gnawing on the food. They raised their heads and made threatening howls when they heard noises.

Liu Hong snorted, and it was as if a thunderclap had exploded. It startled the wild wolves who fled wailing in anguish. Liu Hong examined the corpses: "This is indeed the Stone Rending Bow's power. Sick Yellow Tiger actually gifted away his own famed weapon, could he be a disciple trained by Sick Yellow Tiger? No, with this old sick tiger's martial arts, he couldn't teach this kind of disciple."

"However he even gave him the Stone Rending Bow. Sick Yellow Tiger is probably of a mind to have him take over the position of chief hunter. No wonder he's not afraid of the Black Wind Camp. He only needs to return to Horse Rein Village, then the Black Wind Camp will have no way of doing anything to him. It's not like they're able to destroy Horse Rein Village."

"Does Li Qingshan really plan on killing every last of them?" The pungent smell of blood assaulted his nose. Dragon Li was trembling a little. He'd trained martial arts for more than ten years. For him brawls and scuffles were merely everyday meals. But with the Iron Fist Gate's prestige inside Suncheer City, there

was absolutely no opponent who'd struggle with them to the death. At most he gave a correction to short-sighted hooligans or guests from the martial world passing by. Where had he seen so many dead people.

Liu Hong actually felt it was obvious and lectured his disciple: "Since you contracted a blood feud, of course you need to kill them to the last. Little Dragon, Suncheer City is really too comfortable. With your talents, your skills should originally have been much higher."

Dragon Li mumbled something and was unable of answering.

Liu Hong continued to examine the corpses: "Eh, this wound is really peculiar!" He found a bandit that had died with his throat slit.

"What's strange about it?"

"This bandit died inside the crowd. Look at his expression and posture when he died, it looks like he had no way to react."

"What's going on?" Then he found many similar traces on the bandit corpses. Dragon Li imagined the strange picture at that time, and bursts of cold went through his heart and mind. He couldn't resist looking left and right. The forest's darkness seemed to conceal ghosts and monsters. He only felt much more at ease when he looked at Liu Hong.

“It’s achievable as long as your movement technique is powerful enough. But this kind of movement technique, there’s only the Dragon Gate Sect’s master who can compare to it in the whole of Suncheer City. This Li Qingshan has a helper, and moreover a very strong one.” No matter how rich Liu Hong’s experience was walking the martial world, he still couldn’t guess that the reason the bandits couldn’t react was because they had entirely no way of seeing the enemy.

Following the trails left on the ground, they searched toward the depths of the mountain. Corpse after bandit corpse laid there, as obvious as road signs.

Some had taken an arrow and fallen. Some had died with a slit throat.

Dragon Li’s nerves were already numb. He remembered Li Qingshan’s words: “Today you all have to die.” He originally thought those were but words spoken in anger, but looking at it now they were actually a death sentence. He hadn’t been very afraid back then when Li Qingshan had clutched his neck, but now he felt bursts and bursts of lingering fear.

Dragon Li said after discovering another bandit corpse: “The mountain bandits are all dead, there’s only the third boss left.” Afterwards they found a horse fallen to the ground, its mouth frothing with spit.

Not long later, Liu Hong stopped his steps and looked at the foot of a great tree. Even this old hand from the martial world let out an extremely astonished expression. The blood had spread far away,

and the scent of blood was even stronger than at the vicinity of the bonfire, where the mountain bandits had died in greatest numbers.

Dragon Li could only take one glance at it. He couldn't resist retching, as if he wanted to vomit out every horror witnessed this night.

All night long, the third boss had seemingly sunken into a nightmare he couldn't wake up from. The men beside him died one by one, while the god of death pressed on behind step by step.

The third boss used his movement technique, desperately fleeing toward the Black Wind mountain camp. Although he couldn't compare to the Dragon Gate Sect's elegance, his speed wasn't any slower, maybe because his potential had been stimulated by the crisis.

A chilly wind revolved all around, tightly chasing after him, making him not dare to pause any second. It was only until the inner strength in his whole body had been entirely exhausted that he stopped under a great tree, panting in big mouthfuls.

Looking down toward the slope, he could already see the Black Wind mountain camp's outline. He smiled then.

“Du!”

A feather arrow whistled as it broke through the air and pierced his thigh, nailing it deeply into the tree. The dead leaves were as

rain, drizzling down.

The third boss had no time to pay attention to the sharp pain. He watched the horrifying silhouette walk out from between the trees, his face carrying a faint smile, like a hunter finally catching up to a prey after a long pursuit. The bowstring of the great bow in his hands was still quivering.

“It ends here, third boss!”

“I admit defeat today. The rivers and lakes are only a small world, there’s no harm in making friends. Ah!” At this desperate juncture, the third boss actually took out the attitude of a gangster, mentioning some cliched lines about the martial world, but a feather arrow had already pierced him through before he could finish.

“Don’t say this word, you don’t deserve it. Come, tell me, tell me everything about the Black Wind Camp’s situation, how many men you have, how many bosses, what kind of martial arts does the big boss train in?”

“If I told you, will you not kill me?” The third boss’ body was drenched in sweat, both from pain and from fear.

Li Qingshan thought for a moment, “Impossible, I already said that you needed to die today. I’ll give you a clean death!” Even deception wasn’t needed, just clearly tell him, I precisely have to kill you. You can talk, or you can not talk.

The third boss said: “Go fuck yourself, don’t hesitate to come at if you want to kill or peel, see if this old father will frown or not.”

Li Qingshan laughed coldly, “That suits my intentions!” In the depths of his eyes flowed a crimson light even he wasn’t conscious of.

Dragon Li forcefully restored his calm, his eyes avoiding the corpse under the tree as best as he could: “Master, do we still need to continue the pursuit?”

Liu Hong waved his hand: “No need. With the emergence of such a fiendish star, the rivers and lakes will henceforth become more eventful.”

He’d seen many men of the martial world with savage means. Merely this third boss by himself wouldn’t fall downwind. But to be able to show such a merciless hand from the beginning was truly rarely seen. Who wouldn’t need to vomit a few times, go through many life and death experiences, before they were able to gradually harden their hearts.

Dragon Li said: “He’s still only a third-grade talent, he relied on sneak attacks to damage the third boss, why does master put such heavy value on him?”

Liu Hong said: “I’ll only tell you that this kind of character breeds like flies among the rivers and lakes. There is no one among them that isn’t a powerful man, and any martial art will manifest a formidable power in the hands of this kind of person. You must

absolutely not randomly make an enemy out of them.”

“Why’s that?” Dragon Li didn’t understand. Would your strength become powerful as long as you had a spicy hand and a vicious heart?

“The essence of the martial dao lies within killing.”

However, the Li Qingshan highly praised as a fiendish star was at this moment kneeling and vomiting beside a small rivulet, vomiting until tears filled his face.

In the end, the third boss’ bones hadn’t prove as hard as he’d claimed, and he’d told Li Qingshan any information he wanted to know in minute details, only begging for death.

After cutting off the third boss with a slash, the crimson light inside his eyes had dimmed down, and it seemed that he’d only realized then what he had done – he’d tormented a living man with incomparably cruel methods. Not only that, the most frightening was that he’d derived the greatest elation from it.

What’s really happening to me?

A bovine hoof stamped into the rivulet’s water. Li Qingshan lifted his head. The green bull watched him, saying in a tone that seemed to both praise him and at the same time tease him: “You’re looking more and more like a demon!”

“And what, about it?” Li Qingshan replied with willful obstinacy. He understood that as he gradually followed deeper into the path of his cultivation, this supernatural skill also deepened its influence over his nature day by day. Since it was a supernatural skill from the dao of monsters and demons, then it couldn’t possibly be humane leniency and devoted love.

Chapter 40: A Name Shaking Through

Suncheer

The green bull said: “Do you still want to keep going? Don’t blame me for not reminding you, there’s no telling whether you’d really turn into a demon or not.”

“As long as there’s no shame when I look inside my heart and I am able to free the feelings deep inside my chest, then even if I turned into a demon I would have no complaints and no regrets.” Li Qingshan stood up and said upright and unafraid. His confused mind had been stimulated into staunchness by the green bull’s provocation.

The green bull had no choice but to once again feel a new level of respect for him. Even if a cultivator’s will were resolute, he’d still feel fear and repulsion when he heard he’d degenerate into the dao of demons and become a monster.

It was originally prepared to patiently convince him, but Li Qingshan wasn’t too much affected and was still able to keep to his own choice without any hint of indecisiveness. This was truly rare. But it was also fine like this. If he were the kind of person to be invariably confused about this kind of matters, it would also not have been worth its efforts.

The era Li Qingshan had lived in in his former world was an era where information had exploded. As a nerd, he’d absorbed day and night every kind of movies and novels as food for the mind. He came to understand the most diverse schools of thoughts, and also saw the most fearsome and grandest of scenes.

His tolerance had become stronger under the impact of every kind of information. Few people could probably compare in this era. He wouldn't be slave to the bindings of any conventional thinking. This kind superiority and boldness was slowly manifesting a strength that couldn't be replaced by any divine skill or treasure.

However strong the aptitude for cultivation displayed by Li Qingshan, it would still hardly enter the green bull's eyes. But it was utterly different for the uniqueness of his nature; the green bull placed extreme value on it: "Follow me!"

A bull and a man traveled forward through twists and turns on this savage mountain where no road existed.

The green bull didn't say where it was headed, and neither did Li Qingshan ask. After he had obtained an understanding of the Black Wind Camp's strength from the third boss' mouth, he'd immediately known that his present self was definitely not the Black Wind Camp's match. He could only become stronger.

After walking for who knew how long, a noise suddenly spread over from the forest. The rumble neared following their steps forward, finally becoming like thunder.

Just like light at the end of the tunnel, the view before their eyes suddenly opened to a wide panorama. A waterfall flew down a cliff a hundred feet tall, falling into the deep pond like a jade dragon, splashing snowflake-like sprays. A great whirlpool revolved

ceaselessly in the center of the deep pool, with many small whirlpools all around.

Li Qingshan stood in front of the waterfall. Although his will was unwavering, he still shook a little facing this creation of nature: “Brother bull, this is?”

“A waterfall.”

“Of course I know it’s a waterfall, why did you bring me here?”

“Of course it’s for cultivation!”

At this time, a piece of broken tree dropped down from the top of the waterfall and was swept inside the whirlpool in a flash. It violently crashed into a rock standing inside the water and broke into many wooden fragments. If a man were to be swept inside, it could only end up with a torn body and broken bones.

Li Qingshan drew in cold air: “In here?”

The green bull said: “This is the fastest shortcut if you want to cultivate the strength of one bull. To do it or not, it’s all up to you.”

Li Qingshan firmly jumped toward the deep pool as soon as its voice fell. The information he obtained from the third boss appeared in his mind while still in mid-air

The Black Wind Camp had about three hundred men with a total of seven bosses. Of course, they were six at present. Among them, five bosses were third-grade masters. The big boss was named Black Bear Xiong Xiangwu by men of the martial world. He was a genuine second-grade master, and he could comfortably beat all the other bosses put together.

Li Qingshan's present strength was also merely at the peak of third grade. Without using stealth and ambushes, he could probably only confront two bosses. He would doubtlessly lose if he were to fight three, and would be forced to run. Don't even mention facing the Black Wind camp master, this was a colossus he couldn't prevail against right now.

The only good news was that great snow would seal off the mountains once winter came. If the Black Wind Camp wanted to carry out large scale operations, they'd wait at least until the beginning of spring. This was the time left to him. He had to become stronger. Only then could he block the Black Wind Camp, save the Crouching Bull Village, and complete the pledge he undertook.

All those thoughts went past in a flash. He saw the water rush closer and closer to him. Li Qingshan's valiance manifested itself, and in a an instant he repressed down all his fear and anxiety. His mind regained its serenity and quickly adjusted the posture of his body. He took a deep breath in and hit the water with a loud crash.

The green bull kept talking at the top of the pool: "I was going to say to take things step by step, start with sitting under the

waterfall.” It immediately sensed a resentful aura assaulting his way. Little An was giving it a deathly stare. The green bull was feeling faintly uncomfortable: “Little An, don’t look at me like that!”

The torrential currents battered Li Qingshan’s body. He was like a small boat inside a rainy storm, his movements not under his control. He could crash into the reefs at any moment and sink.

Li Qingshan’s decent swimming skills couldn’t be displayed a single bit at this very moment. He operated the Bull Demon Skin Refining, eliminating the pain from the torrent lashing at his skin. A black shadow pressed toward him without even leaving him the time to breath and relax.

The currents pushed him bumping toward a rock. The great tree earlier was a good forewarning. Even with the Bull Demon Skin Refining protecting his body, his bones would still be entirely broken until he died under the collision. It was too difficult trying to resist the power of nature with a human body.

“Bull Demon Hoof Stamp!” A gust of true qi sank into his dantian. Li Qingshan’s body seemed to become heavier out of nowhere and suddenly sank downward. He stamped on the hard bottom of the pond. The rocks cracked, and two deep footprints were left engraved into them.

The currents shifted once again at the bottom and pulled him toward the greatest whirlpool. He spared no effort to nail himself in place and resist the currents.

One mouthful of air was quickly exhausted, and the sensation of suffocation tightly gripped at him. In this kind of torrential momentum, it was entirely impossible to swim and break out of the water surface. He would be drawn by the current inside the whirlpool as soon as his feet left the bottom.

His consciousness dimmed very quickly, and even the deafening rumbles seemed to be coming from far away.

Suddenly, there was a coolness on his chest, and his true qi reacted by itself.

Li Qingshan's consciousness regained its clarity. He saw Little An's little hands pushing against his chest, anxiety filling across the whole of his face. His yin qi had aroused a reaction from the true qi.

The true qi abruptly revolved faster at this juncture between life and death. It rushed to his nose and mouth, and the feeling of suffocation vanished. Breathing was replaced with innate true qi. Li Qingshan hadn't expected true qi to have even this kind of marvelous use. He hurriedly nodded at Little An to signify his thanks, then he clenched his teeth, loosened his feet, and allowed the currents to draw him inside the great whirlpool.

Little An hovered all around the vortex for a while, then suddenly resolved himself and returned ashore. He respectfully knelt on the ground and paid homage to the green bull.

The green bull said: “You want to help him?”

Little An nodded fiercely.

Liu Hong and Dragon Li returned to Crouching Bull Village. They appeased the villagers, then returned to Suncheer City.

The little village seemingly restored its quiet, but the feeling of restless anxiety couldn't be rid of. The Black Wind Camp pressed upon their heads like a great mountain, and many people wanted to run away from this village.

But the pledge Li Qingshan had left behind before leaving gave hope to everyone. At the critical juncture, the village hero Dragon Li wasn't able to protect them, and the great character from the city Liu Hong had come only after the events. There had only been Li Qingshan who stood in front of everyone and protected them with his own power.

Later, the government soldiers from the legends actually appeared. They carried away the third boss' head as well as the heads of the several dozen mountain bandits. Suncheer City was astonished. There was actually someone who dared to offend the Black Wind Camp. Officials and criminals alike all came to know of a name – Li Qingshan.

Inside the county government offices, County Magistrate Fatty ordered the adviser: “Hurry, hurry to request commendation from the lord prefect. This official eliminated a band of bandits as soon as he came to Suncheer City. Who still dares to say that this official

has no ability. Hang all those heads on the city's gates, let the city populace know of this official's fierceness. Also, find this Li Qingshan for me, this official has to thank him face to face for his life-saving grace. There's also great riches and honor to give him!"

The adviser said: "My lord, to ask the lord prefect for commendation is a matter of course, but let's just not hang the heads. That Black Wind Camp isn't good to provoke. As to that Li Qingshan, I fear it'll be difficult to escape from death for him."

Correct, in many people's eyes, Li Qingshan was already a dead man. Although they praised and admired Li Qingshan's fierceness and martial arts, no one felt that he was a match for the Black Wind Camp. The Black Bear Xiong Xiangwu was a figure that could make children cry at night inside Suncheer City. He had already been older than Li Qingshan back when he became famous. The two of them were entirely on two different levels.

County Magistrate Fatty hesitated. It'd be too regretful if he couldn't show off a little this great merit fallen from the sky. His small eyes spun in circle, then he violently slapped the table: "I am an official, he is a bandit, do I still have to fear him. Transmit my orders, take all the bandit heads and hang them over the city gates. Let's see if those local country tyrants still dare not to pay the bandit repression taxes."

Chapter 41: Dao Of The Beautiful Bones

The adviser could only comply. The lord county magistrate's lust for silver had already repressed his fear of the Black Wind Camp. This wasn't something that could be changed with mere dissuasion. Moreover the Black Wind Camp would presumably not dare to brazenly kill officials in revolt.

County Magistrate Fatty's momentum disappeared all of a sudden as he said in a small voice: "Anyway I'm not the one who killed them, so the Black Wind camp master won't go as far as making trouble for me right!"

The adviser twirled his pointy beard: "They shouldn't, but just in case, you could ask your sister for help and let the lord prefect send over reinforcements."

County Magistrate Fatty said: "That's right, although he's the lord prefect, he's still my brother-in-law. We're all one family. We won't have to fear anyone as long as he sends the Eagle Wolf guard over." Although he'd grown thick and fat, he could still rely on a younger sister prettier than flowers. The prefect had taken a fancy to her and took her in as a concubine, heavily favoring her. He'd also followed the boat and risen with the tide, pleading to his sister to blow some wind into his sails on the pillows and get him a posting.

The lord prefect didn't like him, so he casually sent him as a county magistrate to remote Suncheer City, not letting him the opportunity to run rampant by exploiting his connections, and also removing him away from his sister. It could be described as hitting

two birds with one stone.

The adviser thought: how could the Eagle Wolf guard be dispatched so easily, it'll already be fine if they sent a bodyguard from the prefect's mansion. "Then what about Li Qingshan?"

County Magistrate Fatty thought for a little: "No matter what he's this official's life-saving benefactor, when we see him we'll give him some taels of silver, then make him leave somewhere else. The Clear River prefecture is so big, where couldn't he go."

Inside Horse Rein Village, Sick Yellow Tiger was first greatly surprised when he heard the news, then laughed out loud afterwards: "Well done!" His disease had disappeared after drinking the spiritual wine, and he became ruddy and full of vitality. Not only his martial ability was restored, it had even made great strides forward.

"Chief hunter, now that he offended the Black Wind Camp so thoroughly, isn't it stirring trouble for Horse Rein Village? What he carries is your Stone Rending Bow after all. You shouldn't have given it to him to begin with. He's probably already made his getaway without leaving a trace."

Little Black was dissatisfied inside. He'd eaten Li Qingshan's fist that day in the market, and although he didn't dare take revenge, he was still a little resentful. He was originally a prominent figure among the younger generation in the village, but Li Qingshan had completely overshadowed him as soon as he came. Now he was in the spotlight once again, so his heart was full of jealousy.

Sick Yellow Tiger said: “If the Black Wind Camp comes knocking to our door, we’ll just take them on whatever they do. But he’s not going to flee, and he’s even less likely to come to us to seek refuge. I’m only a sick tiger while he’s a genuine fierce tiger descending from the mountains”

Henceforth, the “Tiger Descending the Mountains” name became Li Qingshan’s first title.

And when several dozen bandit heads were hung over the city gates, Li Qingshan’s title was spread even further to the four winds.

Great patches and great patches of snowflakes floated down from the sky. In the middle of the night, a black shadow scuttled to the gates and removed the third boss’ head. Then it spurred the horse and sped back to Black Wind Camp, presenting it to camp master Xiong Xiangwu.

Xiong Xiangwu was just like his nickname. Not only was he unusually tall, his body hair was also thick and black, and seen from afar he looked just like a bear. One could tell with one glance that this man was born with divine strength. He stood up and glanced in a circle around him. Whether the bosses divided at either side, or the bandits all around, no one dared to utter a single sound.

“Boom!” His huge bear-like paw violently slapped down. The human head and the long table made of pear wood were both

slapped to pieces together. “This is how incompetents end up! This is also how those who dare provoke me end up!”

Wooden chips fired off in all directions. Several bandits far and near were all pierced on their faces, but no one dared to make any sound or movement.

The second boss stood up waving a folding fan. It was actually a middle-aged man dressed like a scholar. He still wore a long robe in this season, so one could see the profoundness of his inner strength.

“Camp master, the third boss was heavily injured by a sneak attack from someone using the Stone Rending Bow. That’s the only reason he couldn’t resist that kid.”

“Stone Rending Bow? Sick Yellow Tiger!” There was some vigilance in Xiong Xiangwu’s eyes, “Wasn’t he heavily sick?”

“I heard his illness was cured!”

Xiong Xiangwu’s brows bunched into a river as he muttered irresolutely to himself.

On the Old White Peak, Yang Jun said: “Still haven’t found it?” Ire twisted his handsome face. He originally had a hedonistic nature and didn’t have that much patience.

“Little master, I heard some news recently!” Chi Da said.

“The Horse Rein Village’s Sick Yellow Tiger’s disease is cured!”

“And what about it?” Yang Jun said impatiently.

Chi Da secretly cursed idiot: “I heard his disease was a chronic disease, only the spirit ginseng can cure it!”

Yang Jun’s eyes shone. He wished he could immediately go to Horse Rein Village and interrogate them thoroughly, but he wasn’t mad yet. He steadied his face and said: “Go invite my father. The spirit ginseng isn’t so easy to digest, even if he ate it he still has to spit it out!”

Amidst so much clamor, not many people paid attention to the fact that there was a pit dug behind Li Qingshan’s house, while that porcelain jar with a skeleton buried inside had vanished.

Great snow fell, and the pool’s icy cold cut increasingly deeper into the bones, without any hint of freezing. Li Qingshan climbed out from the water, and laid on a patch of dried grass, his lips blue. He gazed at the gray sky over the white waterfall, the air transforming into white mist as it left his lungs.

This kind of cultivation was simply seeking death, but Li Qingshan was only willing to climb up to the shore for a slight rest after exhausting all the strength and true qi in his body.

He drank a mouthful of spiritual wine. His body restored some

warmth only then, and the dried up true qi once again started rushing forth.

A wild animal roasted over the bonfire, emitting a strong aroma. Little An squatted at the side like a professional roasting master, turning the wooden pick on one hand while sprinkling condiments brought from home on the other, showing single-hearted devotion.

The hunting knife danced and cut off a big piece of meat when he saw Li Qingshan come out. He held it in both hands and brought in front of his mouth. He only exposed a smile after seeing Li Qingshan wolf it down.

Li Qingshan ate until his mouth was entirely covered in grease, then suddenly said: “Weren’t you afraid of fire?” Little An was afraid of light and was also afraid of fire. There were many restrictions on his actions. Originally it was impossible for him to squat so carefree beside the flames. Although today was a cloudy day, Little An would still usually hide inside the locust wood plaque and refuse to come out.

Little An hesitated and couldn’t answer.

Li Qingshan smiled: “You learned some supernatural skill from brother bull right? It’s not easy to fish something from its hands, why are you hiding it from me?”

Little An hesitated and held up a porcelain jar from the grass with great difficulty. Li Qingshan opened the lid and took a look. The reek of blood assaulted him. The tiny small white skeleton

inside was dripping with bright red blood.

The two colors white and red formed an extremely harsh contrast to the eyes. It was filled with a bloody and sinister feeling.

Li Qingshan frowned: “What’s this?”

Little An was like a child who’d done something wrong. He lowered his head and didn’t speak.

“Dao of the Beautiful Bones!” The green bull appeared suddenly and said out five words.

“Is this also a supernatural skill?”

“Ghosts don’t have flesh. They seem free and easy, and can even avoid ordinary people’s senses, but they are innately damaged when it comes to cultivation. Moreover they’re afraid of fire and afraid of light, while also restrained by many techniques.”

“But this isn’t impossible to solve. Slowly absorbing yang qi is but the crudest way. There’s a saying in the vastness of the Dharma: beauty to bones, [white bones and flesh](#), the material is emptiness, the invisible is material. Within the space of a single thought, a beauty can turn into a skeleton, white bones can also give birth to flesh and blood. There’s a senior Buddhist monk who yearned to reach the realm of Bodhisattvas and failed, devoured by a heavenly calamity. He wasn’t resigned and suddenly gave birth to demon thoughts. From Buddhism he fell into the way of the

demons, inverting his daoist power and creating the . He refined bones [sariras](#), cultivated into a skeleton demon god, and called himself the Skeleton Bodhisattva.”

While I’m no expert on Buddhism, I think those lines originally meant that one should look beneath the surface and see the bones inside the flesh and skin, since even beauty can turn into ashes in a fleeting instant

A sarira is a Buddhist relic. Often specifically denoting round beads supposedly found within the ashes of cremated Buddhist masters.

Chapter 42: Strength Of One Bull

Li Qingshan sucked in a deep breath: “Skeleton Bodhisattva, while still using a demon dao!” Although he didn’t know yet what kind of level this senior Buddhist monk on the verge of reaching the realm of Bodhisattvas had reached, he still realized that this was probably a supernatural skill far surpassing his imagination.

Li Qingshan’s expression became heavy as he said: “I’m afraid this divine skill is probably not very easy to cultivate!”

The green bull said: “That’s right, this kind of supernatural skill manipulates the creation of life and death. Not only it requires the cultivator’s soul to have outstanding aptitude, it also needs to use the fresh blood of creatures at the moment of their death as sacrificial refining, to also endure the burning heat of blood and vital breath to acquire large amount of qi essence. But right now we’re only using animal blood as a temporary stopgap. The best material for sacrificial refining is naturally human blood, especially from martial artists who possess rich blood and vitality.”

Li Qingshan’s heart trembled. No matter who heard about this way of cultivation, they could only think of evil arts and demon dao. And no matter the legend or story, those who used as many human lives as they could to stuff up their cultivation were all villains, and all ended with a wretched death.

He couldn’t help asking: “Why cultivate this?”

Little An was scared until his face was pale white. His wisdom

had gradually recovered and he also knew that this was an extremely evil demon dao.

The green bull said: “Of course it’s to help you. Heh, could only this be considered a superior ghost enslaving heart technique?”

Li Qingshan’s whole body shook, and he couldn’t speak out any word of condemnation anymore. He lowered his head and only smiled bitterly: “Looks like we both followed the wrong master, we’re doomed to walk into the abyss on this demon road.”

Only then did Little An feel relieved and smile shyly.

A sika deer scuttled inside the woods, dodging the evil wind that followed it like a shadow, but in the end a hunting knife slit its throat. The splash of fresh blood hadn’t had time yet to fall to the ground that

it was caught by a porcelain jar. As soon as it inside, the evil wind swirled up a skeleton dripping with fresh blood.

The skeleton sat cross-legged, unexpectedly seated just like an old monk. There was unexpectedly a secretive feeling of holiness and evil mixed together. If a senior monk were present at this time, maybe he could have understood the Buddhist truth about the cycle of desolation and glory, or the back and forth between life and death.

Li Qingshan could only watch Little An attach himself on the

skeleton and refine the blood energy. The blood energy leaped like flames of blood. Little An's brows creased tightly and his soul trembled, enduring the greatest of pains.

For supernatural skills from the ways of demons, most of them looked for shortcuts, but shortcuts were also dangerous roads that required one to pay extremely great costs and take extreme risks. The pain of the blood energy burning the soul surpassed even the pain of the body being set ablaze. He still had to maintain his consciousness with great perseverance and cultivate the supernatural skill. It was truly something ordinary people couldn't cultivate.

Li Qingshan clenched his fists and felt as if a flame was also burning inside his heart, so hot he couldn't resist. The misery Little An had suffered with the witch was probably not even one percent of this present moment. He reached his hand out and wanted to stop it.

The green bull said: "This isn't only for you. You have things you want to do, dreams you wish to realize. He is also the same, this his his freedom."

"His dream?"

"Correct, his dream is precisely to be able to help you." The green bull couldn't resist crack up at his wisecrack rhetoric, but it saw that Li Qingshan showed no sign of laughing, so it took its smile back. "Do you know? I have no idea just how happy he was when I agreed to this little ghost's request. Moreover he's very happy even now. As long as I can free the feelings deep inside my chest,

whatever happens I will have no regrets and no complaints, isn't this something you said?"

It took a long while to refine the blood energy. It merged with the skeleton, and there was a faint layer of dark red attached to the bones.

Li Qingshan took out the spirit ginseng, and pricked out another drop of ginseng liquid, then dropped it between Little An's eyebrows. Little An closed his eyes and fell deeply asleep.

Li Qingshan turned around and once again leaped into the icy cold pond. It was the only way to cool down his heart and mind.

The days went by all of a sudden. The hundred thousand mountains were all draped in adornments made of silvery silk. Li Qingshan went inside the water to train every day, and almost everyday he'd only come out with his body full of injuries. Without a physique surpassing ordinary men and without the constant nourishment of the spiritual wine, his body would have collapsed long ago.

Little An followed suit, continuously hunting and killing wild beasts. At first he only used the blood from small vegetarian animals like wild hares or gazelles, then later he refined carnivores full of heavy blood energy and balefulness like tigers and panthers.

It was as if the two of them were competing against each other as they desperately trained their supernatural skills. The taste of the wine soaked with spirit ginseng was fainter and fainter.

The Bull Demon Ground Stamp steadied the body, the Bull Demon Skin Refining resisted the currents, while the Bull Demon Horn Gore struck at the whirlpool.

The true qi also revolved like a whirlpool, becoming a very small cyclone. The true qi flowed to his four limbs and hundred bones, its speed increasingly higher.

The deep pool's surges were ten times more violent than usual.

Li Qingshan fired out a fist.

“Boom.” Like the sound of muffled thunder exploding in the water, a fearsome aura radiated from within the pool, alarming countless birds and beasts.

Little An's heart jumped. It was as if some fearful wild beast had been released, far surpassing ordinary predators. He stared tightly at the water's surface. The pool's surface had restored its calm, and that great ceaselessly rotating whirlpool had surprisingly disappeared.

A smile floated from the green bull's eyes.

A tall silhouette leaped out from the deep pool and landed on the rocks. Li Qingshan's bronze-colored body was robust as a bull, as if carved from rocks, and every muscle was filled with explosive strength.

He smashed a punch on the rocks at his feet. There was a loud “bang.” It didn’t seem like flesh hitting stone, but more like stone meeting stone.

After a moment of quiet, “crack crack!” These huge rocks polished by the pool’s water for countless years split open in multiple crevices, then finally exploded into pieces.

Li Qingshan had already jumped to the side before the rocks had broken into pieces. He watched his own two hands, muttering: “Is this the strength of one bull?” He felt that his body contained almost boundless strength, as if he’d shed his mortal body and exchanged his bones. If he met the kind of third-grade masters like the third boss, he could squeeze them to death with only one hand, without any hope for the opponent to injured a single hair on his body.

The green bull said: “You finally entered the door of the dao.”

Li Qingshan took the Stone Rending Bow and pulled it like the moon. The originally hard steel bow was now as soft as ordinary wooden bows.

“Beng Beng Beng,” Li Qingshan again and again pulled the bowstring, actually displaying the Pearl String Arrows technique with a three stones bow. Exploding sounds came from the bowstrings with this series of continuous arrows, as if the shaking sounds of the plucking string were cutting the air open.

Li Qingshan felt he still had strength to spare and didn't stop. With a great roar, he fired arrows up and down, left and right, shooting once in every direction.

Power, an unending stream of power, as if he could do anything as long as he wanted to, beat every enemies. This was finally the feeling of a supernatural power not belonging to any mortal martial art.

Little An watched on the side with unlimited adoration.

“Little An, time to go out of the mountains!” Li Qingshan grabbed up the porcelain jar and walked out of the mountains, not toward the Black Wind Camp, but to Suncheer City.

The noises from the waterfall fell far away. The pool's waters surged once more, spinning again into whirlpools.

The two words “Suncheer City” were engraved over the tall gates. Li Qingshan looked up at them for a while. He had heard of this city ever since he was a child, but today was merely the first time he had come here.

Chapter 43: Tiger Descending The Mountains

Li Qingshan didn't return to Crouching Bull Village. The small village was safe and sound at least for now. Neither did he go to Horse Rein Village. He didn't want to bring his own troubles to someone else. He didn't head to the Black Wind Camp either, even more so, even if he had a blood feud with the Black Wind Camp, and even if those Black Wind mountain bandits would probably move out once spring came and raze the small village that had birthed him.

He laughed coldly in his heart. You see as an enemy, why wouldn't I treat you bunch as enemies. He was bound to kill his way inside the Black Mountain Camp, and take the head off from the Black Wind camp master of far-reaching fame. He couldn't give a clean death to this creature replete with vice. Only then could he feel happiness in his chest.

He cultivated the supernatural skill so bitterly. Why, it was precisely to entirely kill off those hated bandits. But he still had to make some preparations before that.

He didn't even have any casual weapon in his hands. It was too much of a disadvantage to fight empty-handed. Even lions used all their strength to capture rabbits, not to mention that the Black Wind's two hundred bandits weren't two hundred rabbits. Each and every of them had human blood on their hands and they were all extremely violent.

Once he charged inside, it wouldn't be a fight between martial

artists, but almost a battlefield melee. If he still carelessly underestimated them, then there would be a problem with his head.

Suncheer City's "Golden Spear Shop" was an extremely famous weapon shop. He planned on going there and have a look, but one had to spend money in order to buy weapons. Not only he was penniless right now, he didn't even have any decent clothes on him.

His shabby and ragged garments exposed his chest, attracting sidelong glances from passersby. Clothing yourself like this in this kind of weather, aren't you afraid of freezing to death?

Li Qingshan trained every day inside the deep pool, how would he feel this little chill.

But no one treated him as a beggar, because on his face there was none of the self-abasement and vulgar spirit seen on penniless people. Instead, it was brimming with strong self-confidence, as if no matter what difficulty he encountered, he could solve them with his two hands.

He watched all around as he walked on the streets, admiring this city filled with a classical flavor. He didn't try to conceal his own village hick status.

A carriage suddenly sped along his way. The coachman brandished a whip and shouted loudly: "Get lost! Get lost!" He proudly laughed out loud as he saw the pedestrians scramble out of

the way.

They were one and all filled with indignation as they watched the carriage move away, but no one dared to say anything. This was a carriage from the Zhang mansion, a great noble house in Suncheer City. Not mentioning driving pedestrians away, even if they ran over someone and killed them, it would still only be a matter of spending some money at most.

The coachman suddenly saw a figure clothed in rags in front who didn't seem to be able to hear his voice, and didn't know to dodge. He cursed loudly: "Scram away stinky beggar!" He didn't try to rein the horses in and just allowed the carriage to collide past.

The passersby also shouted loudly "careful." They saw the carriage about to hit the beggar's body when the beggar suddenly flashed sideways and evaded it by a hair.

The coachman didn't have any time to react yet when the carriage under him stopped abruptly. He flew out as if carried on a magic cloud like an immortal.

The carriage's inside was even more of a mess. Sharp womanly screams rose.

The two horses dragging the carriage rose on their rear hooves and let out long neighs. The carriage seemed to have been struck by magic and was nailed to the same place, unable to advance one bit despite its creaks and groans. The coachman rose up with a "carp skip-up." He was unexpectedly an expert, and he was about

to open his mouth and throw out great curses, but then he saw the onlookers on both sides watch the rear of the carriage with big eyes and open mouths.

Li Qingshan was grabbing the carriage frame in a single hand, his two feet stamping deep into the ground, not moving one step. He didn't move, so the horse carriage could naturally not move either.

The coachman swallowed a mouthful of spit. What kind of power was this?

A young man clothed in luxurious brocades and filled with the breath of alcohol from head to toes jumped out of the carriage: "Lai Fu, what the hell are you doing!" He saw Lai Fu point at Li Qingshan and cursed: "Stinky beggar, stay a bit farther from my carriage, if you touch it I'll have your hand cut off!" He was intoxicated and didn't see that Li Qingshan's hand was clutching his carriage right now.

"I'm no beggar, I'm called Li Qingshan." Li Qingshan informed him of his name, about to teach a lesson to this skirt-chasing second generation and that grand domineering slave.

"What Li...Qingshan!" The young man's eyes were confused and filled with contempt. But after some thoughts, his tone suddenly changed, as if someone had squeezed his neck. He also woke up from his drunken stupor: "It's...it's...that Li Qingshan...."

Li Qingshan felt weird and said: "You know me!"

The coachman howled in anguish: “Noble son, it’s...it’s the Tiger Descending the Mountains!” His originally bright red face had suddenly turned pale white.

“Tiger Descending the Mountains? What thing is that?” While Li Qingshan was frowning, brother noble son knelt down with a “putong.” “This noble son, no no no, this lowly self has caused much offenses, please young hero spare a life!” Then he untied the purse from his waist and proffered it in both hands: “This money is the humble self’s compensation to the young hero as an apology!”

When had the onlookers seen the noble son of the Zhang family with such a servile attitude. They raised their eyebrows one and all, but when they heard the four words “Tiger Descending the Mountains,” the crowd’s gaze on Li Qingshan immediately changed, admiration mixed with fear within.

Li Qingshan weighed the purse. There was truly quite a bit of money inside, enough to buy him some decent clothes, eat his fill in the best restaurant and have a good sleep at the inn.

However he couldn’t make head nor tail of it. I wasn’t even going to kill anyone, at most I’d hit you with two punches real light. I don’t even dare use too much strength, why are you so scared like this.

He could instinctively feel that the reason the other side was so afraid of him wasn’t because of his skills at stopping the horse carriage with one hand. But seeing the other’s terrified attitude as if pee was going to flow on his ass, he also didn’t have any interest

in teaching them a lesson anymore. He took the purse and walked away.

Seeing Li Qingshan leave in the distance, this brother noble son climbed up from the ground with soft feet, glancing at the mouth of the street while trembling in fear. That Li Qingshan was actually just in front of his eyes. This was indeed a frightening character who'd killed several dozens of people. No matter how arrogant and despotic he was, he still didn't dare to stir up any trouble in front of this kind of man.

His face flushed red at the onlookers' mocking smiles. He turned his face around and saw the coachman hiding at one side. His anger was big enough to give him big guts, and he kicked madly as he went forward. "Eh, you still dare to hide, let's see you hide! Let's see you not drive the carriage carefully!" Although the coachman was pregnant with martial learning, he didn't dare even slant his body, and only begged for forgiveness in a low voice.

Li Qingshan's heart was steadier as he carried the purse, although it had come a bit inexplicably. He suddenly remembered his top priorities, he had to inquire about the news and understand the changes in the Black Wind Camp. And there just happened to be an old fellow villager in Suncheer City, someone from the martial world to boot. He asked many people and arrived in front of the Iron Fist Gate.

There were two big bald fellows in front of the gates, standing like two iron towers, their arms as thick as ordinary people's thighs crossed together, their bright eyes sweeping through the pedestrians passing by. Before even coming near the gate entrance,

the passersby were already detouring far away, walking on the other side of the street. The Iron Fist Gate's prestige was obvious to see.

Seeing a "beggar" in ragged clothes come to the gate, one of the burly fellows rudely said: "Get lost, this isn't the place for you to beg."

The other burly man stopped his companion. He examined Li Qingshan from head to toes and said with a mocking smile: "Looks like you kid are also an expert, how did you degenerate into such an appearance!" He could see that Li Qingshan's physique was sturdy and he didn't fear the cold.

Li Qingshan said: "I'm looking for someone. The two sirs please pass on the message, he's called Dragon Li, tell him I'm an old fellow villager of his, called Li Qingshan!"

The two tall burly men were originally indifferent. They only became careful when they heard the two words "Dragon Li," after all this was the gate master's disciple. But their expressions greatly changed when they heard the two words "Li Qingshan."

"Tiger Descending the Mountains Li Qingshan!"

Li Qingshan understood only then that "Tiger Descending the Mountains" indicated himself. He complained in his heart: "What kind of lame nickname is that!" Men of the martial world lacked culture, but he had no desire to be bunched together with those jackals wolves tigers and panthers.

“Atchoo!” Inside Horse Rein Village, Sick Yellow Tiger let out a giant sneeze.

Chapter 44: Dragon Gate Suzerain

Little Black said: “Chief hunter, your body!”

“My body’s cured, did the men from Black Wind Camp and Dragon Gate Sect leave yet?”

“They still refuse to retreat, they insist on meeting the village master.”

“Just tell them I’m heavily sick and it’s inconvenient for me to see them. If someone dares to charge in by force, no need to be polite, just shoot them dead!” Sick Yellow Tiger had his two hands over the stove. This cold really wasn’t a weather to let out a cool cat.

“Chief Hunter Yellow has a big tone, will you also shoot this certain Yang to death?” A voice suddenly sounded from outside the door. The door broke into pieces and a fierce gale rushed inside. A middle-aged man with refined features and a longsword at his hips stood inside the doorway. His sharp eyes twinkled like shiny swords, not as mild as he looked on the surface.

Sick Yellow Tiger didn’t dare neglect him. He jumped up, hugged his fist and said “Suzerain Yang, long time no see!”

Inside a hundred miles, there was only one person who could be called a suzerain. The newcomer was precisely the Dragon Gate Sect’s suzerain, Yang Anzhi. His Dragon Gate Sword Art was renowned far and wide, while his movement technique was even

more masterly. Based on merely martial arts, he could be called Suncheer's first.

As long as sons from great families and clans in the vicinity wanted to learn martial arts, they'd all send them to the Dragon Gate Sect. Those sons of gentry were all gathered together, so it was hard to avoid giving rise to arrogance and despotism. But at the same time it was an enormous influence. If one had to assess it, it would be the prime power of the righteous dao in Suncheer.

Yang Anzhi observed Sick Yellow Tiger up and down: "Your disease is indeed cured, no wonder you refused to meet even the elders from my sect. I'm not going to waste any time, where's the spirit ginseng?"

Sick Yellow Tiger said: "I haven't seen any what spirit ginseng, is the suzerain bullying us humble men of Horse Rein Village?" Several dozen bows pointed at Yang Anzhi. All of the village's hunters had already reacted.

Yang Anzhi said: "If we added a Stone Rending Bow on top, perhaps you could truly make me stay behind forever. Why doesn't chief hunter Yellow give it a try."

Sick Yellow Tiger squinted his eyes: "What's your meaning?"

Yang Anzhi said: "Camp master Xiong is just outside the door. Your Stone Rending Bow already killed his third boss, do you also want to provoke my sect at the same time?"

Sick Yellow Tiger laughed out loud in ridicule: “The dignified leader of Suncheer’s righteous way is unexpectedly mixing up together with the cruelest bandit gang leader, do you really not want any face anymore? Oh right, I forgot, there’s not much differences between you, you both rely on strength to bully the weak and push honest folks around. If I were to evaluate things, it’s still suzerain Yang who’s better at making money!”

Anger appeared on Yang Anzhi’s face and his hand fell on his sword hilt, but the noise of bowstrings pulled taut all around stopped his movements. He threatened coldly: “Perhaps chief hunter Yellow isn’t afraid, but I wonder how many people of this village can survive if we were to truly go to war?”

Sick Yellow Tiger said: “I’ve already eaten the spirit ginseng. No matter how ruthless suzerain Yang’s words are, you still won’t be able to take it back.”

Yang Anzhi said: “So the spirit ginseng is indeed in your hands. Cease your lies, the spirit ginseng isn’t something that can be digested overnight. It’s also not something you can hog to yourself, you’ve already used it for so long, now hand it out. I’ll remember your friendship, perhaps I can help you withstand the Black Wind Camp.”

Sick Yellow Tiger said: “If I say I ate it then I ate it. If you don’t believe this chief hunter, don’t hesitate to come and try to snatch it by force.”

Bows were fully pulled, longwords were draw from their scabbards, and a great battle was on the verge of breaking out.

Little Black suddenly said from the side: “We haven’t seen any what spirit ginseng. Our chief hunter’s disease got better after drinking wine given by Li Qingshan, if you want to look for someone then go look for him!”

Yang Anzhi’s eyes brightened. Sick Yellow Tiger became infuriated and shouted: “Shut your mouth!”

Little Black said with a straight back: “Chief hunter, he’s only an outsider. He gave you spirit wine and also took the Stone Rending Bow away. We don’t owe him anything, why should we protect him at the risk of our lives. I’m also thinking of the village!”

Yang Anzhi smiled: “So it was like this. A certain Yang erroneously blamed brother Yellow. No wonder that kid’s martial arts flew up by leaps and bounds like this. Then I’ll leave it at that and say my goodbyes.” He operated his movement technique and fluttered away. If Li Qingshan were there at this moment, he would know that this man’s movement technique was ten times more profound compared to his son Yang Jun or that group of disciples.

The hunters didn’t receive any order and didn’t dare casually let out their arrows. Yang Anzhi left a sentence from far away: “Chief hunter Yellow’s management indeed follows the right path, the children of the village already show concern for the larger picture.”

Sick Yellow Tiger’s expression was even uglier. Any powerful

leader needed absolute authority. As long as he made a decision, no matter right or wrong, he couldn't allow his subordinates to easily go against it.

“Li Qingshan is my life-saving benefactor. He took out the spiritual wine in spite of the dangers because he could have faith in me, otherwise no one would know he carries the spirit ginseng. What you did trapped me in injustice.”

Little Black knelt down: “Little Black is willing to receive death!”

A group of hunters gathered around them and tried to persuade him: “Chief hunter, Little Black was also doing it for the village!” “So many days have gone by, who knows where Qingshan has escaped to, there's absolutely no need for us to resist so stiffly.”

Li Qingshan watched the big burly man frantically scrambling away to report his presence, then his eyes fell on the sturdy man left in front of the gates who was trembling in trepidation. He mumbled to himself: “Am I so frightening?”

The tall fellow left behind only hated himself for being too slow and let his companion rush out first. As to the question about frightening or not, he didn't dare answer. He only knew that the young man in front of him had killed several dozen bandits with his own hands. Even more, he'd obtained inside information and knew that he'd tortured to death the third boss who had great fame in Suncheer. If this kind of man wasn't frightening, who was frightening?

One was a hero of the martial world over thirty and a face full of viciousness. Any ordinary person would feel fear when they saw him. The other was a young man aged fifteen with a face that hadn't yet shed off all of its childishness, and not a single shred of ferociousness. But the former seeing the latter was like a mouse seeing a cat. It was really a little strange.

Li Qingshan suddenly understood that his fame had already been established. Although it had started with this "Tiger Descending the Mountains" nickname that didn't sound really too great, it was still already enough to awe villains.

In a short moment, Dragon Li came to welcome him outside the gates. His heart jumped without warning when he saw Li Qingshan, and his gaze didn't dare face Li Qingshan's eyes. He once again remembered the bloody scenes he'd seen in the mountains some days ago, and a fear impossible to repress rose from his heart.

He said with his face full of an unnatural smile: "So it's.. it's Qingshan, our gate master sends you an invitation!"

Li Qingshan followed him and crossed inside the gates, bypassing a screen wall with the word "Martial" written on it. They went through the courtyard and came to the martial training field. He saw able-bodied fellows with their chests bared split into two rows as they lined up in welcome, but their expressions were all unkind.

The Iron Fist gate master Liu Hong sat with a heroic posture on the great lion chair and said in a heavy tone: "You are Tiger Descending the Mountains Li Qingshan?"

Li Qingshan frowned, because of this attitude making an initial show of strength, and even more because of this Tiger Descending the Mountains nickname. If someone told him at this moment that he only needed to do in a certain someone to change to a better sounding nickname, he would definitely charge out and do that guy in with no hesitation.

“The gate master asked you something!” The fellow closest to Liu Hong shouted with a voice resembling a great bell. His body was covered in vigorous muscles and filled with tattoos, his temples slightly protruding out. He was obviously a master practicing both internal and outer martial arts in tandem.

Li Qingshan estimated that this man’s strength was above the third boss. No wonder he dared to talk to him like this. Since the Iron Fist Gate could proclaim itself heroes and tyrants inside Suncheer City, they also had some tricks to show off with.

Dragon Li hurriedly said: “Eldest brother quell your anger. Qingshan comes from the village and hasn’t experienced the world.” Then he pulled on Li Qingshan’s sleeve: “Why aren’t you greeting my master yet.”

Li Qingshan casually arched his hands and said: “Greetings to Old Hero Liu!” without much deference. Liu Hong frowned, while the Iron Fist Gate disciples on both sides all exposed angry expressions.

Dragon Li silently blamed him for being insensible. You already offended the Black Wind Camp, the only way to settle things down

is to invite master to take the lead and also have Horse Rein Village's Sick Yellow Tiger step in. Master is a grand second-grade master, isn't he worth showing some respect to?

“This is my sect's head apprentice brother, men of the rivers and lakes call him...” Li Qingshan waved his hand and interrupted: “There's no need to remember the nicknames of small fries.” He wasn't one to be rude, but he would definitely not be polite if someone else showed him rudeness first.

There was a delay in Dragon Li's voice. Eldest brother's face flushed bright red in an instant. The bones on his body exploded in crackling rumbles, aggressively threatening Li Qingshan.

Chapter 45: Vitality Of Skin And Flesh

“Eldest brother quell your anger, eldest brother quell your anger!” Dragon Li tried to stop his elder brother. The eldest apprentice brother grabbed his shoulders and threw him to the side like a little chicken, then waved his fist in a punch toward Li Qingshan.

“Wang Lei stop!” At Liu Hong’s shout, the eldest brother’s fist steadily stopped in front of Li Qingshan’s face. He said: “Master, let me give a lesson to this kid who doesn’t know the immensity of heaven and earth!”

Li Qingshan was annoyed by this show: “I originally came to ask you some things, but since you’re all so busy I’ll say goodbye first.” If you have words to say just say them, what’s with all this posturing and showboating

“Kid, your little life won’t last you long.”

Li Qingshan indeed stopped his steps: “Oh, what do you mean?”

Liu Hong said: “Men of the Black Wind Camp are all over the place looking for you. It wouldn’t matter if you just hide carefully, but you still dare to expose your face in public, you’ll die without a doubt.”

Li Qingshan said: “Then I ask your honored self for guidance. If we followed normal developments, how could I escape this calamity?”

“As long as you agree to join the Iron Fist Gate, this old man has ways of safeguarding your little life.” This was precisely Liu Hong’s goal. The Iron Fist Gate was a faction and not a sect, it didn’t require everyone in the faction to be a sect disciple. The strength and natural talent Li Qingshan displayed at such a young age were enough to tempt anyone from the martial world.

But as an old hand of the rivers and lakes who’d been famous for a long time already, Liu Hong would naturally not request Li Qingshan to join in earnest. So perhaps he needed to first make an initial show of strength and weaken Li Qingshan’s aura and prestige, let him know the vastness of heaven and earth. After that he could persuade him with kind words and make him understand the bright prospects of joining the Iron Fist Gate, ultimately making him most willing to request his adhesion to the gate.

But Li Qingshan’s rudeness had also annoyed him: “However, this old man has changed his mind now.” You really think that you’re a grand figure now that you’ve killed a few dozen trivial robbers and a Black Wind Camp boss?

Li Qingshan said: “Then that’s really for the best! If there’s nothing else, I’ll leave first.”

“Stand still!” Liu Hong finally moved. He seemed ordinary when still, but once he moved he was like a wild lion hissing in anger. He crossed one step forward, and the next step already carried him in front of Li Qingshan.

Li Qingshan's hair stood up straight all over his body, as if he was being stared at by a ferocious wild beast. Instinctive vigilance rose inside him as he smiled lightly: "A man of the rivers and lakes when all is said and done, just use violence when words don't work."

"Eat a fist from this old man!" Liu Hong originally wished to enlist Li Qingshan and didn't want to make an enemy out of him, but it was impossible not to give him a little lesson since a later generation dared to be so insolent with him. Maybe he believed that the Black Wind Camp's big boss Xiong Xiangwu and the third boss were the same grade of goods, and it was the only reason he dared to be so arrogant. In that case he could only let him experience the absolute difference between a second-grade master and a third-grade master.

"Wait!"

Liu Hong asked in a heavy voice: "What, are you afraid now?"

"Master's power is divine!" The head apprentice Wang Lei shouted while lifting his fist. He watched Li Qingshan with a gaze filled with derision.

The other sect members also followed suit and shouted loudly: "The gate master's might is divine!"

Li Qingshan said: "I once let Dragon Li throw three punches first!"

Liu Hong squinted his eyes and revealed a dangerous killing aura: “This is due to the lowly disciple’s meager martial arts. What, you also want to let the old man send you three fists?”

“No!” Before Liu Hong’s expression could ease off, Li Qingshan already said on: “Since you’re an old man, I’m thinking about letting you throw ten punches!”

Utter shame and humiliation! Those were the only four words inside Liu Hong’s heart. At this moment he seriously had killing in mind: “Then let me come!”

“Wait!”

“What now?”

“Old Hero Liu, you’re also a character with longstanding fame in the martial world, I can’t let you punch me for nothing!” Li Qingshan thought a little: “Ten taels of silver for one punch, it’s not too expensive right!” I have no grudge or hatred with you. If I fought with you, there wouldn’t be any benefits for me even if I won, not even a single copper coin. It’d only start a weird and inexplicable feud instead. It just happens I have no money for a weapon, so I have to think of ways to earn some in any case. Thinking back and forth about it, the only craft I have is still the supernatural skill.

Those words thoroughly angered Liu Hong. This was simply mixing him together with the sideshow performers of the martial world. His anger was extreme but he laughed instead: “Good good

good, I'm afraid you won't have a life left to spend it!"

Dragon Li went forward to block in great hurry. He'd seen with his own eyes Liu Hong crack open a stone stele with his pair of fists. If they fell on a human body, wouldn't they hit someone into flesh paste. "Ma..."

But it was already too late. "Bang bang bang bang bang!" The punches were both fast and heavy like the gallop of an iron horse. Five punches landed upon Li Qingshan's body in the space of a moment. Dragon Li's "ster" didn't have time to leave his mouth yet when the biting cold wind from the punches blew so near he could no longer keep his eyes open, to say nothing about going forward.

The momentum of the fists came very fast and left just as fast. Everyone was still immersed in the might of the five punches when Liu Hong dropped his hands down. He stood straight, sighing softly: "Alas, today I once again broke my killing abstention."

Dragon Li stared with big eyes and an open mouth. The words "please show mercy" couldn't leave his mouth anymore either. The eldest brother Wang Lei was the first one to react as he yelled: "Master's might is divine!"

"Fifty taels!" Li Qingshan suddenly said. Liu Hong stared with full round eyes. He heard Li Qingshan utter a praise: "Those are indeed heavy punches, I almost couldn't endure!"

His expression was as usual, how was it like the face of someone

who couldn't endure. It was more like an unscrupulous businessman trying to swindle his customers into spending more so he could earn more.

The facts were also precisely like this. After cultivating to the strength of one bull, the "Bull Demon Skin Refining" had also gone through an earthshaking change. The sensation the original "Bull Demon Skin Refining" gave off was merely that of a strong outer martial art bitterly trained. Only now could it be said to manifest the genuine might of a supernatural skill.

A layer of a tough and tenacious membrane had formed between his skin and flesh. When those punches heavy enough to crack a stone stele open had fallen upon his body, it was as if they were hitting rubber. The strength had been entirely defused, while the unsophisticated inner strength contained within the fists had been dispelled by the true qi when it penetrated inside his body. A second-grade master's fist was already unable to injure him.

Without any effort he'd earned fifty taels in one second. Even robbing the rich to help the poor wasn't so time-efficient! Moreover, before it came to the very last resort, he had no desire to do that kind of shady wall hugging and door climbing business.

However, did this also count as flesh trade?

The Iron Lion pounced with an explosive shout without leaving him much time to think. How many years had it been. He hadn't lost such an amount of face ever since returning to Suncheer City and enjoying his retirement. Moreover it was even in front of so many sect disciples.

Heavy punches drowned Li Qingshan like stormy showers.

“Eighty taels, ninety taels, one hundred taels, eh, you still want to keep hitting! Three hundred taels, five hundred taels!” Li Qingshan’s voice went clearly through the storm, continuously provoking Liu Hong’s nerves. The sect members had long ago been stunned into hanging their mouths open.

At first Liu Hong was as vigorous as a dragon and as ferocious as a tiger, but he was at an advanced age after all and his physique had fallen . In not too much of a time he was grasping for breath, his sweat dripping like rain.

Li Qingshan couldn’t bear to watch and wanted to say: “Grandpa, you can’t break my defenses!” But thinking about his grand money-making plan, he could only resist those benevolent thoughts and allow him to keep hitting on.

Liu Hong was being firmly repressed by Li Qingshan by just relying on the three words Iron Fist Gate. This wasn’t to say that fists had entirely no way to match up to weapons. When it came to this kind of masters of the martial world, it was even easier to exploit internal strength through fists and break the enemy’s internal organs in one blow.

Combined with the concussive effects, it was very easy to send the enemy to the land of the dead as long as one occupied the upper hand in a battle of flesh against flesh. But unfortunately he had met with a freak like Li Qingshan. Liu Hong wasn’t losing because

his skills couldn't measure up, but losing because he trained in martial arts while the other side cultivated a divine skill.

Liu Hong roughly gasped for air. Fist after fist pounded without strength on Li Qingshan's chest.

Li Qingshan said: "Should be enough now!" He gave Dragon Li a look.

Dragon Li hurriedly supported Liu Hong to sit on the great lion chair. Liu Hong was still staring at Li Qingshan in disbelief: "What...what martial art do you train in? Even for a second-grade master, no, it's impossible even for a first-grade master, impossible!"

Chapter 46: The Weak Have No Courtesy

I'm training a supernatural power that I just reached the beginner stage of. Of course Li Qingshan couldn't speak like that. He said respectfully: "It's just a hard martial art made to take a beating. Right... Just now Old Hero Liu you hit more than a hundred punches. I'll only charge a thousand taels and we'll call it quit."

His tone and words were much more polite than earlier, just as polite as a salesman who knew that the customer was king.

The others were still sunken inside their amazement and were wondering whether they were dreaming, "You..." The eldest brother was about to angrily rebuke Li Qingshan, but Li Qingshan's gaze swept his way and he instantly didn't dare to talk too much anymore. Instead he stared fiercely at Dragon Li, didn't you say he was a third-grade master?

Dragon Li likewise felt wronged and couldn't speak. Back then Li Qingshan was truly a third-grade master, could he have concealed his strength? There was only this explanation left now. There was no way he'd believe that Li Qingshan had stepped up to such a level thanks to his efforts during this period of time.

Liu Hong waved his big hand, "Go fetch the silver!"

"Master!"

"Don't waste time with your nonsense!"

Liu Hong handed silver notes worth a thousand taels into Li Qingshan's hands: "Earlier it was the old man who was rude, Li.. young hero Li please do not take offense, regard this money as the old man's apology."

Li Qingshan was stumped, he never thought that Liu Hong would change so fast. He was indeed worthy of being Dragon Li's master. He originally thought that he would fly into a rage out of shame.

"The young hero's outstanding disposition is truly excellent, your martial arts are exceptional. You've been buried among wild weeds so far, isn't it a waste of talent. You might as well join my Iron Fist Gate, you absolutely won't be disappointed. As to that Black Wind Camp, it'll be enough if the old man helps you say a few words, I think that black bear will also give me some face. Since when did no one die walking through the martial world, could it be that only your bosses are allowed to kill people? As the saying goes, porcelain jars don't bump with earthen jars..."

Liu Hong prattled on and on, his aggressive and domineering momentum swept away clean, instead resembling a doting elder worried about a later generation.

The disciples never saw Liu Hong with such an attitude even if they thought hard about it. They all stared with big round eyes.

Li Qingshan suddenly realized that his present status was equal to Liu Hong, maybe even a little higher. It was unlike earlier when he'd just stepped inside the sect, with Liu Hong's eyes looking

down on him. All of this was because he'd displayed outstanding "martial learning."

The other side became polite, so he returned the politeness, "Just now it was this kid who was rude and offended Old Hero Liu. This money was only for jokes, please take it back!" He only took it inside his bosom after both went through a few rounds of concessions and politeness, finally relieved inside.

"Many thanks for Old Hero Liu's good intentions. For the time being I have no plan of joining any faction. During this time I wasn't hiding but training my martial arts. I will excise this Black Wind Camp tumor with my own hands! This time I merely came to inquire about some information."

Liu Hong said: "The Black Wind Camp has stood for so many years, how could it be so easy to uproot. The old man is confident he isn't that much weaker than that black bear, but I would only be rushing on the road to death if I tried to shake the Black Wind Camp by my lone self. Guerilla fighting isn't the same as martial contests where one faces another. It's impossible to keep up even if one possesses great vigor."

The struggles among the rivers and lakes weren't merely about comparing martial arts. They were also about influence. He acknowledged Li Qingshan's martial arts, but he was still a man without influence who'd chosen to travel a solitary path.

Li Qingshan lightly shook his head, "I have my plans."

Liu Hong had no way to persuade him any further. He told him in details the changes happening in the martial world in Suncheer's vicinity during those few days, one by one.

Li Qingshan heard about the Black Wind Camp going to make trouble for Horse Rein Village. "Old Hero Liu, this one has a matter he wishes to request. Please spread the news as much as possible that this Li Qingshan is already inside Suncheer City and hasn't fled. He is absolutely not the type to weigh down others. He did things by himself and will shoulder them by himself."

"Good, heroism indeed belongs to youth. The old man has faith that you fear no one in Suncheer City." Liu Hong said: "Also, the Dragon Gate Sect sent many people to Horse Rein Village to meet chief hunter Yellow face to face, I don't know what they want to do?"

Li Qingshan thoughts revolved, then he realized it was about the spirit ginseng. But he couldn't repress a cold smile when he remembered that he still had some old debts to settle with that young master of the Dragon Gate Sect: "Many thanks to the Old Hero for mentioning this point. This one still has some matters waiting for him and will be taking his leaves first."

Liu Hong sent Dragon Li to accompany Li Qingshan out of the gates. His expression suddenly changed, and he broke a wooden pile inside the martial training field into pieces with one punch, "Don't blame the old man's fist for lacking in sentiments if anyone dares to spread out today's matter!"

Eldest brother Wang Lei shouted a "Master!" but didn't say

anything further.

Liu Hong saw that the other disciples also had faces filled with grievance and indignation. Liu Hong had switched from arrogance to deference, and the sect disciples all felt they had no face left.

Liu Hong sighed: “Are you thinking that this master showed an excessive attitude of flattering the mighty? This thing indeed started with our own rudeness first.”

“But... Those weren’t your own personal disciples...”

“If he were a mere third-grade master, then right then he would have been arrogant and rude, and this old man wouldn’t have been in the wrong even if I killed him. But he isn’t. It is us who judged him wrong. Facing a second-grade master or even higher, it was our rudeness and offense to adopt such an attitude. The fights to the death that have been caused by such things in the martial world are too many to count.”

“Isn’t this kind of struggle to the death very stupid. In the martial world, the strong ones are supreme. The old man couldn’t have survived until now without understanding this principle. You stayed too comfortable inside Suncheer City. Even if there’s a master passing by, this old man would come out to put things in order and protect you. Hence you don’t even understand such simple reasoning.”

If Li Qingshan were present at this moment, he would surely raise his head to the sky and laugh out loud. So it turned out that

weakness was the same as lacking courtesy. Not only lacking courtesy, but also lacking reason, lacking power. Compared with clearly dividing everything in the world in rights and wrongs, it was still this criteria that was much more simple and practical.

But this was precisely the logic of an old hand from the martial world who never despised others because of his seniority and admitted defeat when one needed to admit defeat. And it was precisely this set of logic that ensured he could spend his later years in peace.

The disciples lowered their heads one and all, receiving the lecture. They once again thought about the reason Li Qingshan had become famous. With such powerful martial arts and such ruthless methods, no one would dare say they could walk out of this yard if they'd truly fallen out and become hostile.

Liu Hong nodded in satisfaction. He'd preserved his dignity among the sect members. Finally he concluded: "Among the rivers and lakes, no matter how high one's martial arts, one can't walk far by running blindly rampant relying only on strength. Someone's out of luck this time." His words were very deep, but no one knew if he was talking about the Black Wind Camp or Li Qingshan.

Li Qingshan ran directly to the Golden Spear Shop with Dragon Li's guidance. With silver in hand, he was also full of confidence as he crossed inside the doors: "Boss, I want to see your weapons!"

The shopkeeper was plump and white, about forty years old and a face full of shrewdness. He took a look at Li Qingshan, then saw

Dragon Li, and his expression immediately became much more welcoming. He put down the ledger and cupped his hands, saying: “So it turns to be the Iron Fist Gate’s young hero Li bringing a friend to look at some weapons. There’s only substandard goods outside, come come come, please come inside!”

When one opened shop to do business, it was impossible not to go along and have any dealings with a local tyrant like the Iron Fist Gate. Dragon Li could also amount to a little fame in the streets of Suncheer City, and any shopkeeper would show some courtesy when they saw him.

All kinds of weapons fell into their eyes when they stepped into the hall. What sabers swords spears halberds hatchets battle axes hooks or pitchforks, everything one could think of was there. It was indeed worthy of a great weapon shop.

“I don’t know which weapon this young hero is expert with, is it the saber or the sword? Here we have top-notch hundred folded blades and hundred folded swords available in every size. If you’re still not satisfied, you can have one especially custom-made.” The shopkeeper introduced them to his wares while ordering someone to take out the first-rate blades and swords at the same time. Each of them were unusually exquisite and twinkled with radiant rays.

There was no male who wasn’t fond of weapons. Li Qingshan was likewise delighted and eager to give them a try. Those weren’t decorations but genuine polished sharp weapons made to kill men. He weighed this and held that, shaking his head in the end: “Do you have a weapon that’s a bit heavier?”

Chapter 47: Twelve Feet Of Spear

The shopkeeper was surprised for a second. Looks like you're also a warrior from the martial world, why don't you pick a weapon you're proficient at instead of looking for something heavy. But he immediately smiled: "I have I have I have!" Whatever your requirements, it's all good as long as I can make a sale.

This was something Li Qingshan had carefully planned out. It would really become a close-quarter battlefield melee if he wanted to break the Black Wind Camp. If he wanted to unleash his own strength to the limit, he could only use the heaviest weapon with the greatest reach, then use that weapon to suppress the enemy's superior numbers.

A shop assistant full of robust vitality carried out a great ghost-headed [saber](#). The shopkeeper said: "This blade weighs thirty five pounds, it's five feet four inches long. You could cut off a hair by blowing it on the blade. Is the young hero satisfied?"

A heavy blade/saber/dao with traditionally a ghost head engraved in the hilt or handle.

Li Qingshan grabbed the handle. He tried a couple moves, the blade glinting with cold light as it flashed by. The great ghost-headed blade was light as a goose feather in his hand: "Too light, a bit heavier."

The shop assistant looked on speechless. Just how much strength was that.

Two assistants carried out a great green dragon halberd. The shopkeeper said: “This halberd weighs in at sixty two pounds. It’s eight feet and eight inches long. Look at this crescent tooth blade, no one but an experienced blacksmith with consummate craftsmanship could hammer it out.”

Li Qingshan flicked the halberd tip: “This isn’t bad, only it’s too easy to break. Also, do you really not have any heavier weapons?” He still remembered the scene where the tip had broken and flown out as soon as he’d waved the halberd around.

Of course, the reason was mostly because he didn’t understand the art of the halberd and had been using it recklessly, but what he was going to face wasn’t a mere enemy or two.

The shopkeeper stared. He looked at Dragon Li’s face, and didn’t refute the three words “easy to break,” while thinking: “Just how do you use your weapons?” He was of a mind to embarrass Li Qingshan as he waved his hand and said: “Then please come with me to the weapon storehouse, there’s a weapon you’ll certainly be satisfied with.”

Li Qingshan also became curious and followed the shopkeeper to the rear yard. They went past the weapon tryout martial field and came to the warehouse. The myriad of weapons inside delighted the eyes like glittering jewels, but the most eye-catching among them was a great black iron spear.

The spear seemed to have been forged out of pure iron, the spear tip and the spear’s body seamlessly merging into one. There wasn’t even a spear [tassel](#) on it, only a tiger head swallowing the spear tip

engraved where the shaft joined the blade, radiating a wild and bold domineering aura.

Usually a red tassel often found on Chinese spears where the blade joins the shaft, presumable to distract and confuse the enemy's vision when it waves around.

“This spear is called the Tyrant Spear. It's twelve feet long and weighs a hundred and forty two pounds. It's this shop's heaviest weapon. If the young hero wants to buy it, it also comes with a set of Tyrant Spear Art.”

“Good, it'll be this one!” Li Qingshan walked forward and lifted the Tyrant Spear. A heavy and icy cold sensation pressed down on his palms. With a shake, the spear produced a humming cry like a [soaring jiao](#).

A creature from Chinese mythology. Mostly a hornless aquatic (Chinese) dragon. But sometimes it can even mean a alligator-like creature or a human with a serpent tail.

The shopkeeper and his assistants were all rendered speechless. It was one thing to be able to lift it and another thing to be able to use it. It would have merely attracted a few mocking laughs if he couldn't even walk one step after lifting the weapon, but to be able to make the great spear quiver meant that the user's strength could subdue this spear. How great of a strength was that!

This was precisely the most fitting weapon in Li Qingshan's mind. With this weapon he could give the Black Wind mountain bandits a pleasant surprise and let them experience what was called “[an inch longer is an inch stronger](#).”

Saying from martial arts, meaning that range is power.

However he knew nothing about the art of the spear, so he asked: “Where’s the spear technique?”

The shopkeeper said: “Is the young hero determined to buy it, this weapon isn’t cheap. Not even mentioning about the artisan’s efforts, just talking about this much iron...”

Dragon Li said: “Don’t tell us so much nonsense, how much is it. Spit it out, how much do you dare ask for it?”

The shopkeeper extended five fingers: “Since young hero Li says this, I’ll only earn back my capital, five hundred taels.”

Dragon Li immediately berated him: “What, five hundred taels, you’ve gone money-mad. Apart from my brother, who else can carry and use this black iron stick. It can only stay here and gather dust. The way I see it, it’s not even worth a hundred taels.”

Li Qingshan searched around the the weapon storehouse while the two of them bargained back and forth through a battle of tongue swords. A point of light attracted his attention. Inside the dark storehouse, that faint glitter of light was very striking, as if it was unwilling to be buried under the dust.

Li Qingshan looked around left and right. He noticed that no one else seemed to have seen this little light and realized that it was because his own eyes were different from those of ordinary people.

He pretended to he casually go forward to a weapon rack, then held up a wooden box.

He opened the wooden box and saw a small dainty knife lying inside. It was only four inches long and shrouded in a layer of pale blue light. He asked: “Shopkeeper, how are you selling this?”

The shopkeeper froze an instant: “Young hero, you really have sharp eyes, this is my shop’s most treasured item. A famous family’s descendant fallen on hard times left this knife here. It’s extremely sharp. I only bought it after spending one, two hundred taels of silver.”

Li Qingshan “carelessly” put the little knife back into the box, saying to no one in particular: “Too bad it’s so small.”

“Those words are mistaken. It’s precisely because this small knife is small and light that it can be hidden and left for self-defense at a critical moment!”

Dragon Li said: “You’re still making up random things. Whatever we pick up ends up being your shop’s treasure. We’ll just take the little knife as extra and I won’t haggle with you over this bit of silver.”

“How could this be!” The shopkeeper cried in alarm as if someone had stabbed him through with a knife.

In the end, the knife was sold off together with the spear, one big

and one small. The price was set to four hundred taels.

The shopkeeper handed them the items with an expression of suffering. But he was delighted in his heart, he finally sold out those two waste items. Not need to talk about that Tyrant Spear, no one could use it after it was forged and it ended up being wasted iron, but it would still have been too much of a pity to recast it. He'd cursed the blacksmith until his spit flew out because of this spear.

As to that small knife, its origin was actually just as he said. A young man in dire straits had come to his door and was sent off with ten taels of silver. But he'd regretted it very fast. The knife was indeed a good knife that could cut through metal as if it were butter, but it was really too short. Would people actually buy it for several dozen taels and use it as a throwing knife?

Li Qingshan didn't understand the art of the spear, and that <Tyrant Spear Art> was quickly sent into his hands. As expected, it was the most ordinary and the most generic of spear techniques in the martial world, but they actually gave very domineering names to the moves inside, what Sweep Through Thousand Soldiers or Tyrannical Barrier.

Dragon Li only took a glance at it before he stopped reading.

Li Qingshan actually read it once from beginning to end and carefully pondered it over. He went to the martial practice field and started to practice it, move after form.

The art of the spear was originally harder to train in than blade techniques. But cultivating to the strength of one bull hadn't been merely a simple matter of increasing his strength. He'd also gained a deeper comprehension about the control of strength and even the theories between martial arts.

Weapons were but an extension of the limbs!

Li Qingshan's weapon dance was very slow at first, but it became faster and faster soon after. A great spear danced like the wild rush of a black dragon, weaving around Li Qingshan's body as it overflowed wantonly all over the martial field.

Dragon Li kept retreating back, fully moving several dozen steps away. He was so astonished by the power of this spear that he was unable to say anything. It was truly as if a brave unrivaled general were resisting a thousand men and horses on the battlefield with his own strength.

The spearhead pointed forward, a cold light shot out in every direction. The scent of blood splattered all around amidst the cries of ghosts and the howls of gods. He hadn't heard the words Liu Hong had said after they left, but he could still understand why his master had become respectful with Li Qingshan. He already had this stunning martial learning at such a young age, able to grasp a comprehensive mastery after looking over the spear manual once. Together with his incomparably ruthless methods, this kind of person would certainly become a figure with resounding fame through the rivers and lakes in the future, as long as he didn't prematurely die mid-way. His prospects lay far over a second-grade master. Perhaps he could truly comprehend the innate level and

reach a realm he couldn't begin to imagine.

He'd only heard about that kind of characters from his master and he'd never seen one. This Suncheer City wasn't a place worth stopping over for this kind of figure. But dimly, it was as if he were witnessing the rise of such a person.

Chapter 48: The County Magistrate Pays His Debts

Li Qingshan would surely boast about his great insight if he knew what he was thinking inside. He was precisely a bona fide innate master. It was only that this <Bull Demon Strong Fist> didn't put emphasis on cultivating qi, and the time he'd trained in it was short, so he had absolutely no way of showing it off.

His thoughts were entirely submerged into the art of the spear. As his spirit rose, his wrists shook, shaking seven spear patterns as if fresh flowers were in full bloom, bedazzling with their glitter as they surged through the air with “peng peng” sounds.

Li Qingshan suddenly took the spear back, the wild winds following thereafter, stretching the muscles all over his body: “So delightful!”

He still couldn't amount to a master of the dao of the spear. After all, no matter how great his comprehension and how profound his supernatural skill, it was still hard to compare to genuine masters who'd been immersed for decades or even a lifetime in the ways of the spear.

But no master of the spear would be his opponent. As soon as weapons collided, with the hundred and forty two pounds of the Tyrant Spear added to his strength of one bull, any weapon would be struck flying out. It would be a slight injury if it resulted in some mere torn skin between the thumb and the index. Broken hand bones or even broken arm bones were possible.

This was the reason he had to find a heavy weapon. It was the so called “[one strongman could subdue ten martial artists](#).”

Meaning any trick is useless in front of raw power

Li Qingshan was still not satisfied after testing out the spear: “Shopkeeper, I still need two things. One’s a batch of feather arrows, the other’s a suit of armor. It looks like you don’t have either of those here.”

He was already determined to exploit his advantages to the utter limit. Although his Bull Demon Skin Refining could block a second-grade master’s fist, and even an ordinary man’s sword, it was probably still not enough to stop a third-grade master with his internal strength poured into his weapon. Blunt devices and sharp weapons were two quite different things to begin with.

With his strength, he wouldn’t be much burdened even if he put on an armor several dozen pounds heavy, but his defensive power would be greatly increased. He would be even less afraid of the opposite side’s superior numbers when the time came to charge into the bandit lair.

The shopkeeper said with some difficulty: “Those are all military appliances and not ordinary weapons, they usually don’t allow those to be sold off casually. You can probably only find them inside the city’s arsenal.”

Actually this wasn’t the main reason. The majority of his customers were men of the martial world. When did you ever see

someone walk through the rivers and lakes wearing a bulky armor. And even fewer men of the martial world used a bow as their weapon. Otherwise, with a merchant's unscrupulousness and the Golden Spear Shop's strong backing, what would he be afraid of selling as long as there was profit to be made.

Li Qingshan nodded: "Well then, let's leave it at that."

The shopkeeper said: "Wait, I still don't know the young hero's famed name? How did we never meet before."

"I'm called Li Qingshan. It's the first time I come to Suncheer, so of course you've never seen me."

"Tiger Descending the Mountains Li Qingshan!" The shopkeeper was astonished. How would he be unaware of the figure who'd recently stirred up things abuzz.

Li Qingshan raised his eyebrows, determined it absolutely wouldn't do if he couldn't change this nickname. He went to a silk shop and purchased a set of good clothes for himself, then ordered a room in the city's best inn.

Li Qingshan washed his face and rinsed his mouth, then changed into his new clothes. By the time he came out, Dragon Li also said a "good!" in praise.

He'd changed into navy blue warrior garments, outlining the outstanding shape of his body with its thick back and fine waist.

He had an extraordinary martial appearance, which wasn't only due to the clothing. He was imposing and high-spirited after experiencing slaughter and painstaking training, like the sharp cutting edge slowly sharpened out of a treasure sword.

His tanned face still couldn't be called very handsome, but its sharp edges were distinct just as carved stone, and when he looked around there really was a little of his nickname's flavor, a tiger descending from the mountains. He had an awe-inspiring presence that wasn't easily scorned by others.

Two bailiffs suddenly came in front of the door at this time. They hurriedly saluted when they saw Li Qingshan, their eyes not daring to look straight at him, entirely unlike their usual arrogant demeanor when facing ordinary people: "Pardon us, may we ask whether you are young hero Li. Our lord county magistrate requests the pleasure of meeting you. Horses and carriage have already been prepared."

Li Qingshan blinked, unsure why the county magistrate was calling for him. Could it be they wanted to reward him for the merit of killing bandits. He immediately agreed. The county magistrate had the duty of providing security for the populace and remove the bandits. If he could send a few men, Li Qingshan would be even more confident.

Li Qingshan left Dragon Li in charge of the Tyrant Spear and followed the bailiffs to the county government offices. A fat silhouette came out and welcomed him. He grasped Li Qingshan's hand while observing up and down, peeking left and right, his face full of admiration and fondness.

Li Qingshan pulled his hand away with a wary face: “For what reason is my lord looking for me?”

“Little benefactor, did you forget about me? That day on the mountains, the tiger!”

Li Qingshan suddenly remembered: “So it turns out to be you!”

“This official is Ye Dachuan. I’ve looked for little benefactor for a long while, please quickly come in!” Ye Dachuan welcomed Li Qingshan to the hall on the back of the government office, then his expression suddenly changed, “Why are you still idly strolling in this city, hurry to escape!”

Li Qingshan said: “Why would I escape?”

The adviser said: “Do you really not know good from bad? The men from the Black Wind Camp are searching through the whole world for you. You don’t conceal your tracks and still publicly expose your face in Suncheer City. People will come as soon as tomorrow to take away your life.”

So saying he stuffed a bundle filled with silver and goods inside his hands: “We’ve already prepared a post horse outside, you immediately hurry to the Clear River capital, don’t tarry on the way. There’s a letter inside, go to the prefectorial government offices and hand it to my lord county magistrate’s... ouch!”

Ye Dachuan kicked the adviser: “That’s something I was going to say – I’ll let my sister blow into the lord prefect’s ear and guarantee riches and future prospects for you. No matter how fierce the men from the Black Wind Camp, they won’t be able to chase you there.” Then he heaved a deep sigh: “Originally I wanted to make you stay here and become a constable, so you could lend a hand to this official and earn us some more silver for suppressing bandits. Cough cough. The reinforcements this official requested still haven’t come, were they delayed on the way? This place is really too remote.”

The adviser thought: The lord prefect is itching to see you die a clean death, how would he send over men to you!

Li Qingshan originally felt that the situation was funny. Ye Dachuan wore a great crimson official robe over his short and fat body, his appearance just like one of those wretched officials from novels and operas. When it came to this kind of role, they were at best mediocre, and if a bit worse they’d be bullying the honest folks.

But he felt moved seeing him arrange future prospects for himself with a face filled with such earnestness. No matter how many petty villains and sycophants there were in this world, there were still men who planned on repaying favors bestowed upon them.

When he’d first come down from the mountains, his head was filled with thoughts about how pull out the Black Wind Camp down to their roots and exterminate them to the last one. Then he wanted to settle the hatred from the Dragon Gate Sect’s young

master's insults. His thoughts took shape on his face and his whole person radiated bloodthirstiness. After so long, the cruel and murderous side of his nature had inevitably occupied the higher grounds.

But Dragon Li had constantly tried to help him based on the friendship of fellows from the same village, while Ye Dachuan sincerely tried to repay his life-saving grace. None of those two could be said to be righteous gentlemen. They were both commonplace members of the mass of people. But it was precisely those people who let him see that human nature wasn't limited to its sole vile side.

Li Qingshan arched his hands and said: "Many thanks to lord Ye's affections. There's no need to call me benefactor or anything, calling me Qingshan will suffice. However, I didn't come back this time to flee!"

"Not fleeing?" Ye Dachuan angrily said: "Kid, you don't know the immensity of heaven and earth. Do you know much danger this daddy is risking by letting you come into the government office?"

The adviser also tried to persuade him: "That's right, you quickly escape!"

Li Qingshan said with a smile: "I can run, but Crouching Bull Village can't run. Moreover, isn't Lord Ye also also unable to run? This one naturally has some self-confidence since he dares to stay here." He opened the bundle. He saw some silver ingots inside and casually squeezed them.

Ye Dachuan and the adviser stared with round eyes as they watched the silver spill out from the Li Qingshan's hand like mud. They weren't men of the martial world, so where would they have seen such martial arts. Their evaluation of Li Qingshan immediately rose another level.

Ye Dachuan said with some hesitation: "With this kind of martial arts, maybe you can truly be safe and sound as long as you stay within Suncheer City. I'll introduce you to some people, let those Black Wind mountain bandits not dare to fight their way inside the city." He was very willing to have Li Qingshan stay behind. When the time comes, he'd send Li Qingshan to spank whichever noble dared to disregard him, and he'd be able to conscript any silver he wanted.

Li Qingshan said: "My lord said to let me be a constable?"

"Yes yes yes!" Ye Dachuan brows raised in a delighted beam. He'd already begun to fantasize about the imposing prestige of his tyrannical imperiousness as he led Li Qingshan around.

Li Qingshan said: "Then I humbly request the lord to summon soldiers and open the arsenal. I wish to attack and seize the Black Wind Camp, kill off the greatest scourge of Suncheer for my lord's sake."

Chapter 49: Upstairs Suncheer House

Ye Dachuan was stupefied by his ambition. He'd only been thinking about how to preserve Li Qingshan's life under the Black Wind Camp's threat. It would have been best if he could make use of him. But he never thought about going on the offensive and provoke the Black Wind Camp. He wanted to urge him not to get carried away with his wishful thinking. I'm not taking the money to suppress bandits, it's to stuff up my pockets. When the times comes we'll scare off those nobles a bit and collect their money. Everyone will get their share, how nice is that.

But he saw the firmness of Li Qingshan's gaze. Even though his face still hadn't shed off all of its childishness, it was filled with self-confident and high-spirited vigor. His words of exhortation died in his mouth. There was a power about this young man that could move human hearts.

There was a long struggle and hesitation on Ye Dachuan's face, then he suddenly slapped the table and said: "Good! If you truly have this self-confidence, this official will accompany you in this gamble!"

The adviser rushed forward. "My lord, you can't! Those peoples from those places can't be provoked."

Ye Dachuan said: "Move aside. This lord also has bravery in his heart. What can't be provoked, I just happen to want to provoke them!" Hot blood had rushed to his face, but his brain was operating at high speed. Li Qingshan had killed twenty or thirty Black Wind Camp people by himself on top of a boss. The Black

Wind Camp still had probably around two hundred men, meaning ten times more. Could it be that I'm unable of gathering a hundred and sixty or seventy soldiers?

One had to say, the calculations of the great lord Ye who'd never mixed with the martial world and never waged war were considerably naive, but once someone started fantasizing they truly didn't take much else into consideration.

If he could exterminate the Black Wind Camp, he wanted to see who would still dare to say he was an idiot who rose to position networking through skirts. See who still dared not to pay him their money. And if he let his sister blow some wind into his sails on the pillows, who knew if he couldn't even get a promotion and leave this damned place. Moreover, the most important thing was, the Black Wind Camp should certainly have had quite a bit of treasury after looting the local area for so many years. Could be as much as five thousand, no, ten thousand taels of silver.

Lord Ye couldn't even maintain his hot-blooded appearance as he thought of the shining white silver piled into mountains. Drool almost flowed out of his mouth.

At dusk, the most luxurious restaurant in Suncheer City, Suncheer House, was resplendent with light. A dozen banquet tables were set, so luxurious it was painful for Ye Dachuan. Each and every of the wealthy and noble characters of Suncheer City were invited.

Ye Dachuan acted in line with the principle of nothing ventured, nothing gained. He'd painfully shed off capital painstakingly

earned with his blood and tears. Of course, the most important reason was that the restaurant's owner's smile wouldn't change no matter how he tried to persuade him, but no matter what he wouldn't let lord Ye buy on credit.

That was why his expression wasn't too great as he sat down on the main seat. Li Qingshan stood at his side just like a bodyguard, willingly acting as a foil. He saw lord Ye's ugly expression and smiled as he said: "There's no need for my lord to be distressed about silver, didn't I pay it off already?"

It turned out that lord Ye couldn't take out so much silver in the end, and it was still Li Qingshan who'd paid the money. He wasn't a narrow-minded person. He was far much easier to talk to than ordinary people as long as one was willing to treat him with respect in good faith. He had a heroic spirit that esteemed feelings and was indifferent to wealth.

But if someone adopted a high and mighty posture, trying to establish any initial show of strength to beat him into submission, then please humbly forgive him for not being so good-tempered.

Ye Dachuan muttered: "Waiting until I collect silver, I'll certainly pay you back!" This county magistracy of his had such a lack of face, this powerful subordinate was probably mocking him.

Li Qingshan waved his hand and said: "The lord is also doing it to help me. No need to raise the matter of the silver again."

The adviser welcomed noble personages one after another

downstairs. The wooden stairs sounded with incessant “dong dong dong.” Everyone offered salutations to Ye Dachuan when he walked up, greeting him with great respect: “Lord Ye.” Then they took a deep glance at Li Qingshan and said with arched hands: “This one must be the Tiger Descending the Mountains who felled numerous bandits with his own hands. Your fame is like thunder in my ears, like thunder in my ears!”

They were all well-informed people and clearly knew who was today’s genuine protagonist. It was certainly not this Ye Dachuan without any foundation or means, but this young man who’d killed off several dozen mountain bandits.

They didn’t fear Ye Dachuan. They were even unafraid of Li Qingshan, but the combined strength and fame of those two people made them feel ill at ease. They probably couldn’t continue to gloss over the county magistrate like before.

Heavy footsteps stamped upstairs. They didn’t have time to react yet that they heard the adviser downstairs yell at the top of his lungs: “Iron Fist Gate’s Old Hero Liu has arrived.” Everyone’s eyes were concentrated at the mouth of the stairs, and many people even stood up. This level of respect was far from what an empty shell of a county magistrate like Ye Dachuan could match.

The Iron Lion Liu Hong walked upstairs as he led his two disciples Dragon Li and Wang Lei, looking indeed inordinately proud.

The gentry surrounded them one after another. They kept calling out “Old Hero Liu,” “Old brother Liu” depending on their

respective age and status. Even the two disciples beside him obtained countless words of praise.

Quite a few nobles glanced over at Li Qingshan while talking, as if to say: “We know the Iron Fist gate master. Even if you’re tough and fierce you still can’t act recklessly!” In their eyes, even if Li Qingshan was strong, there was still a great difference compared with a character of the martial world with a long-established fame like Liu Hong. This was precisely what they were counting on.

Li Qingshan hadn’t expected Liu Hong to be also included in the figures Ye Dachuan wanted to introduce him to. But thinking about it, he realized that the leading characters of Suncheer City would have organized a greeting ceremony for Ye Dachuan, even if they didn’t take this county magistrate seriously. Otherwise, wouldn’t it amount to not putting the lord prefect into their eyes. Hence the greatest local tyrants of Suncheer would certainly not be missing at such a venue.

Li Qingshan saw Ye Dachuan expose an awkward expression and hesitate about whether he should stand up, so he put his hand on his shoulder and let him stay seated.

A scene that made the crowd astonished emerged at this moment. Liu Hong left the crowd and walked in front of Li Qingshan, saying with a smile: “Young hero Li, we meet again.” The mild attitude made them doubt whether this was the Iron Lion Liu Hong they knew.

Wang Lei also offered an awkward greeting, not daring anymore to be rash with this young man

many years younger than him.

Ye Dachuan was about to help Li Qingshan make the introductions, and was also shocked when he saw this scene: “You know each other?”

Liu Hong patted Dragon Li’s shoulder: “He’s from the same village as my youngest disciple and they’ve been familiar with each other since they were young. It’s also Dragon Li who led him to purchase clothes today when he came to Suncheer.” He’d seen Li Qingshan at first glance as soon as he stepped upstairs and seen him wearing navy blue warrior garments. He stood beside the windows with his hands behind his back, lofty as a lone pine on a cliff, looking like a crane amidst a flock of chicken that attracted everyone’s attention.

Although he felt some animosity toward Li Qingshan in his inner self, he still couldn’t refrain his eyes from shining bright as he praised: “What a valiant young man.” Heroes of the rivers and lakes weren’t extremely fond of men with excessively handsome features. On the contrary, this appearance of Li Qingshan’s could count as a gold standard in his eyes.

Dragon Li could already be said to be someone with outstanding aptitude. He’d taken a fancy to him and received him as his adored last disciple. But compared with this Li Qingshan, it was like a weed facing a pine tree. I don’t know who had this insight for recognizing talent and discovered this fine jade. Why couldn’t I see it back then when I went to Crouching Bull Village?

How could he imagine that Li Qingshan was still in his infancy back when he'd taken Dragon Li as a disciple. Of course there were the many changes brought upon Li Qingshan by the supernatural skill, but one could still see that Li Qingshan's original aptitude wasn't lacking. With the wisdom of a man from two worlds added on top of that, someone would have taken a fancy to him long ago if it weren't for his unfortunate reincarnation that saw him be born in a desolate place like the Crouching Bull Village, and he'd have reached some achievements already.

It was said that heroes weren't afraid of lowly origins, but still no could deny the importance of one's class origin.

The nobles' mood immediately tumbled into a deep ravine. They originally wanted to rely on Liu Hong's might to resist Li Qingshan, but how could they imagine that Li Qingshan was even more familiar with Liu Hong than themselves. The two of them had the faint attitude of friends of equal status. They watched Li Qingshan once again with much more cautiousness in their eyes.

Ye Dachuan's heart was so happy that it bloomed like a flower. "So it turns out that the bailiffs had invited him away from you. Qingshan once rescued this official from the mouth of a tiger. This official only found him today and invited him to act as a constable."

Liu Hong had also been curious at first why Li Qingshan had joined county magistrate Ye as soon as he came to Suncheer City. He only understood now: "So it turns out that Qingshan is that stream-crossing tiger-chasing young hero the county magistrate was talking about. Since lord Ye invites talents and call on the

valorous no matter their age or origins, it's only a matter of time before you can establish your foundations in this Suncheer City."

Li Qingshan said neither servile nor overbearing: "I don't deserve so much praise from Old Hero Liu, I'm also merely trying to borrow lord Ye's power, trying to do something for the people of Suncheer and get rid of a malignant tumor."

The corner of Liu Hong's eye twitched. He chuckled and declined to comment.

Chapter 50: Dragon Gate Comes Fighting

The time was right and the guests had all arrived. Ye Dachuan stood up and offered a toast, first saying a bunch of words like “This official is greatly honored everyone could come” that one said at such occasions. Then he went straight to the main topic, his face revealing an expression of indignation and grievance:

“I invited everyone to come today regarding a great matter of life and death concerning my Suncheer City. Correct, it’s indeed about the Black Wind Camp, this great tumor. The Black Wind bandits are extremely vicious and utterly evil, guilty of monstrous crimes. They snatched a lot of silver...cough, killed who knows how many honest folks.”

He felt extremely angry toward that group of mountain bandits who had unexpectedly even more money than himself. He hurried changed what he was saying after the adviser kicked him under the table.

“And now they even want to massacre the Crouching Bull Village. In my identity of the patriarch official of Suncheer City, what else would I have to tolerate if I had to tolerate this? Everyone must have heard of the one beside me. Tiger Descending the Mountains! Li Qingshan!”

He especially put heavy emphasis on the nickname of resounding fame “Tiger Descending the Mountains,” making Li Qingshan’s eyes twitch.

“This official has presently named this young hero constable of the whole of Suncheer City. He not only killed the Black Wind Camp’s third boss and several dozen bandits with his own hands, now he also wants to exterminate the whole Black Wind Camp. I invite everyone to pay out money and efforts to facilitate this matter. Only then it wouldn’t be a waste of those kind intentions, only then would it not let down the conscience of heaven and earth.” So saying he drained his cup of wine in one gulp.

Suncheer had no soldiers the county magistrate could dispatch. Even bailiffs were old, weak or disabled people idling their days away. But those great houses and great families had high walls and big yards one and all, with many servants and guards. As a result, Suncheer City’s public security was maintained in large part by this great Iron Fist Gate faction. To deploy an army, one could only borrow men from those noble families. Each family only needed to send four or five men to reach county magistrate Ye’s expectations.

The noblemen couldn’t keep drinking anymore. They looked at each others. Was this county magistrate for real this time?

To want money was normal, which county magistrate didn’t want money when they took office. But to want men wasn’t normal.

The first few county magistrates had made a show of leading a group of men for a trip around the mountains after receiving the money, but the magistrates coming after them didn’t even put on any pretense and only said that the timing wasn’t right. As to when the timing would be right, only the heavens knew.

There was an uproar upstairs the restaurant. The nobles didn't even want to fork out the money, not even mentioning men. In case of injuries or death they'd need to spend more money to appease the families, and they'd even offend this group of disciples in exile at the Black Wind Camp.

Who even knew where the Crouching Bull Village was. Destroyed or not, what was it any of their goddamn business. The Black Wind Camp wouldn't come to kill them anyway. As to children from other families, well there was no shortage of them.

A nobleman around forty to fifty years old possessing a virtuous and prestigious appearance said: "Lord Ye, we all understand your solicitude for the common people. We also can't watch and not do anything, we have to at least make some contribution. However, it's impossible if you want us to send out men. And even if we agreed, the guards wouldn't agree, don't you think so?"

He clearly indicated his position in a subtle manner. Since you have some strength right now, we can collect a little money for you as a gesture. You just take this money and keep honest, don't come make trouble for us.

I actually collected some money! Ye Dachuan felt a little incredulous, he really wanted to pinch his thigh and check whether he was dreaming. He'd been fishing left and right ever since he became the county magistrate, but no one ever took him to heart and they hadn't paid out even a single tael of silver.

Success always came too suddenly. Ye Dachuan calmed down his mood and exchanged a look with Li Qingshan as he started to think

whether he should quit while still ahead.

Li Qingshan frowned. He didn't blame those country nobles for regarding nothing but themselves. The heart of ordinary men were like this for the most part. Added to the way the previous county magistrates had conducted themselves, it was already unusual for them to willingly pay out money. There was no need to force them if it wasn't possible to borrow this strength. He said: "Then we offer many thanks to all of you..."

"Dad, you can't give him money!" Thump thump thump. A young man walked upstairs and ferociously stared at Li Qingshan.

Li Qingshan immediately remembered. This was the young man he'd met racing through the streets today, who'd knelt down and given him the purse. How did he suddenly become so bold, was it because he relied on the adults present?

The middle-aged nobleman chided: "Don't play the fool, this isn't a place for you, go downstairs!"

But the young man didn't retreat, haughty self-satisfaction written on his face: "My apprentice brothers came!"

"People from the Dragon Gate Sect came!" Some noble shouted, their voice filled with joy.

"My family's kid is learning martial arts there!"

“That’s right, mine too!”

The nobles whispered to each others with happy expressions. Someone was fortunately sticking out for them so they wouldn’t need to pay out this silver.

Li Qingshan’s face suddenly became chilly. The insult he suffered that day on the mountain path rose again to his brain.

A group of people winded upstairs. Some were young and some were old, each and every one of them clothed in white and wearing a sword. Gathered together, they were seriously awe-imposing and stuck fear in the heart of men, acting as if they were alone in the world.

Their leader was precisely the Dragon Gate Sect’s young master, Yang Jun.

“My lord magistrate, you entertain every party to a banquet. Only the Dragon Gate sect was left out, could it be that you don’t take us seriously.” Yang Jun’s glance swept around. He slightly nodded when he saw Liu Hong, barely amounting to a greeting. His eyes lit up when he saw Li Qingshan, then an incomparable hatred exploded on his face: “You were indeed here, it’s made it easier for us to find you!”

“You’re looking for me?” Li Qingshan felt a little curious. Looking at the opposite side’s expression, it seemed as if he himself were the one who’d deeply offended the other party instead. But in any case he wouldn’t let them go lightly since they sent themselves

to his door right now. It was only unfortunate he didn't have the great spear with him, otherwise he'd have liked to see how many people would die once he swept the spear their way.

"I only regret not killing you with one strike of the sword the first time. Today I'll make you spit out everything you've eaten." Yang Jun looked at Li Qingshan as if watching his most hated personal foe. He'd immediately flown into a rage as soon as he learned that Li Qingshan had taken the spirit ginseng away.

He'd narrowly let the spirit ginseng slip away, and it ultimately fell into this country hick's hands. It was said that the spirit ginseng couldn't be so easily digested, but a great amount of medicinal quality would inevitably have been wasted away after so much time. Otherwise, how could a country bumpkin possibly have the strength to kill the third boss of the Black Wind Camp. This all should have been his originally.

In his eyes, Li Qingshan was an extremely despicable and hateful thief who'd stolen away his belongings. How could he not gnash his teeth in hate. He definitely had to make mincemeat of Li Qingshan.

Ye Dachuan stood up hurriedly: "Young hero Yang, let's talk amicably if you have things to say. Qingshan is this county's constable, how can you threaten him and scream murder." He saw the Dragon Gate Sect come in all aggressive, everyone holding a sword, and had become timid at once. As the saying went, it was difficult for two fists to face a crowd. No matter how high Li Qingshan's martial learning, how could he block everything in the confusion of sword stabs.

Yang Jun said with a somber face: “Lord magistrate, this man stole something extremely important from my Dragon Gate Sect. Today we’ve come to arrest him and bring him to justice, so please don’t stop us. Otherwise you should be careful, swords are blind.” Then he ordered without waiting for an answer: “Get him!” His arrogance and despotism had reached the peak as he smiled insidiously: “Don’t kill him, I’m going to slowly interrogate him about the thing’s whereabouts.”

More than a dozen people pressed forward. The nobles split into two sides as they crashed out of the way, while the magistrate and adviser ran off. At the great round table, there was only Liu Hong left sitting at ease as he leisurely nursed his wine.

There was only Liu Hong who knew best about Li Qingshan’s strength. One could have somewhat outlined the relation between the Iron Fist Gate and the Dragon Gate Sect from Yang Jun’s attitude right now. The Iron Fist Gate walked the way of the lower classes, widely accepting disciples from the streets, while the Dragon Gate Sect walked the way of the upper classes, its sect disciples children from wealthy families for the most part.

Although it couldn’t be said that they were incompatible like fire and water, they’d still never seen eye to eye. So he definitely wouldn’t say any word to warn them, he was more than willing to see some people from Dragon Gate Sect die off, especially that arrogant and despotic Yang Jun who had no respect for him. At the same time, he was also guessing at what that “important thing” could be? It seemed he had heard some rumors.

The one standing in front of the Dragon Gate Sect group was a tall and thin swordsman with a greenish face. His eyes were also filled with vicious enmity as he looked at Li Qingshan. It was precisely Chi Da. He'd greatly lost face in the sect after Li Qingshan broke up his sword tip on the mountain path, and then he'd been punished by the suzerain after going back. The hatred for Li Qingshan had also reached the very limit inside his heart and he was in a hurry to cut off a hand of his.

Chapter 51: Sweeping Through Dragon Gate

Qinshan was merely standing at the windows like a lone pine, as if he hadn't seen the Dragon Gate Sect disciples pressing on him.

The Dragon Gate Sect knows I have the spirit ginseng. Who told them? Sick Yellow Tiger? Fancy that I saved your life.

The hot anger of betrayal soared up, but the corner of his mouth drew a small curve instead, exposing teeth eerie white. Liu Hong's heart lurched as he watched from the side. What a heavy murderous aura!

“Bang!” He lifted a foot and kicked it on the thick square table in front of him. The table was big and wide. It weighted over two hundred pounds, was built from jujube wood, and was easily able to accommodate a meal for ten persons. His kick sent it up flying and crashing toward the Dragon Gate disciples with an extremely fierce momentum.

Chi Da bore the blunt of it. He never imagined such a martial move and watched with terror the square table rush toward his face. But he also reacted quickly. He discarded his sword and brandished his fists, operated his internal strength, and slapped the table.

Li Qingshan sneered. A mantis trying to stop a chariot!

Chi Da's two arms broke at the same time, and his chest sagged inward from the collision with the table. He abruptly spurted out

fresh blood while a burst of crunchy noises from bones shattering into pieces rose at the same time.

The square table didn't stop after neutering one man and carried seven or eight Dragon Gate disciples with it as it whistled through the air. It broke through the railings and dropped downstairs with a huge rumbling sound.

There were also guests downstairs. They were originally wondering who was going to meet with bad luck when they saw the Dragon Gate Sect disciples go upstairs looking awe-inspiring and murderous. They one and all stuck their heads out to watch the show, but they suddenly saw a table drop down along with seven or eight Dragon Gate Sect disciples. They ran away shrieking in fright.

They only encircled forth with fear and doubts after the table hit the floor. Chi Da had already breathed his last. As for the other Dragon Gate disciples, good or bad they had Chi Da as a barrier so they'd avoided dying on the spot, but they still incessantly groaned in pain as they suffered from broken muscles and fractured bones.

The guests watched with stupefaction one and all. When'd they seen the Dragon Gate disciples with such an appearance. Just who exactly was it upstairs?

Li Qingshan remembered bowling out of nowhere. Those Dragon Gate disciples were clothed in white from head to toes, weren't they just like bowling pins. Too bad it wasn't strike.

The remaining five or six Dragon Gate disciples weren't struck out by the table, but they were all drenched in cold sweat from the scare. They stayed blankly where they stood and had actually no idea how they should react. Those disciples from wealthy family trained in martial arts, but when'd they experience genuine battles.

All of this happened in the blink of an eye. Almost no one had time to react yet that the situation had already reversed itself in this split moment. The originally overbearing disciples of the Dragon Gate sect had been swept in half in the turn of an eye.

There was only Liu Hong who'd clearly seen Li Qingshan's movements. His expression was solemn as he thought about whether he could have blocked it himself, or dodged it himself. The verdict was bleak, and his eyebrows bunched even tighter, but the derision on his face also became heavier. It seemed as if he'd been mostly compensated for the face he'd lost to Li Qingshan today.

Li Qingshan didn't care about other people and walked with great strides toward Yang Jun.

Yang Jun was sprawled on the floor at this moment. Li Qingshan had kicked the square table crashing his way just then, but there were Dragon Gate disciples in-between who served as meatshields and gave him time to react. He'd sprawled on the floor at the critical juncture and escaped a disaster.

At this time he still couldn't believe this was real. Those he brought with him were all experts of the sect. There were three

third-grade masters among them, while the others were also proficient fighters hard to come by, but half of them had been killed or injured in the space of one move. He'd led a punitive force to chastise offenses, but it'd become an extremely ironic joke.

Watching Li Qingshan walk his way, he suddenly remembered the several dozen bandits who'd died under Li Qingshan's hands, remembered this person's fearsome ominous fame, remembered that his own martial arts were still far from enough. He frantically pulled his sword out: "Kill him!"

A sword pierced toward Li Qingshan, and at the same time five treasure swords stabbed toward Li Qingshan from the left right front and back, flickering with cold glint. Those Dragon Gate disciples who'd been staring blankly had also recovered. They were elder and junior brothers who trained together all year round, and their cooperation wasn't bad even if they had little experience with genuine battles.

The speed of this offensive wasn't lacking in the slightest. It caged Li Qingshan in a net of swords.

"Careful of the sword formation!" Dragon Li warned loudly, but it was already too late. Six longswords stabbed at the same time into Li Qingshan's body.

Pleasant surprise floated on every swordsman's face. It seemed none of them had thought they could obtain results in such a simple manner. My Dragon Gate Sect's sword formation is indeed extraordinary!

No one could know whether the expression that appeared on Liu Hong's face was mockery or regrets. Too tender, too little experience fighting in the martial world. In a situation where victory was certain, he unexpectedly gave his enemies an exceptional opportunity to besiege him, sending himself to the land of the dead.

However, apart from regrets, there would always be some relief every time an old hand of the rivers and lakes like him witnessed the downfall of a young prodigy. He very much wanted to say proudly, look, it's still old ginger that's the spiciest. The strongest ones weren't necessarily the ones who survived to the end.

The sword tips pierced an inch inside the skin and couldn't move forward any further. The swordsmen's pleased expressions became consternation. They madly poured their strength into the swords, but only managed to bend the tough longswords into arches.

Liu Hong was greatly alarmed: "Could it be that he already trained his enduring martial arts to the realm of being impenetrable by sword and spear." Not to mention, fine steel treasure swords with internal strength focused inside were on a whole different level compared to ordinary weapons. This young man had given him too much amazement.

Li Qingshan slowly said: "No wonder people say that it's hard for two fists to contend with a crowd. This kind of combined offense is on par with an all out attack from an exceptional master." An evil and alien red light difficult to distinguish with the naked eye flowed inside his gaze. "However, how could such weak and

powerless swords injure me!”

The true qi in his body spewed madly. Inch after inch of longswords fractured. Every swordsman toppled over and flew out together while spitting blood. There were only faint white traces left on Li Qingshan’s skin.

Yang Jun felt an extremely turbulent true qi rush into his body. The internal strength he’d painstakingly cultivated for so many years actually couldn’t block a single shred of it as it bashed sideways and collided head on inside his body, tearing his innards.

He was just about to fall downstairs as well when the shadow of a man flashed and came behind Yang Jun’s body. He flapped his sleeves and steadily dropped Yang Jun on the floor.

Li Qingshan’s face exposed a little solemn vigilance. He saw the newcomer’s actions but he wasn’t capable of following this kind of movement technique. His defensive ability was high enough to astonish people, but speed was his greatest weakness.

Yang Anzhi clasped Yang Jun’s wrist. His face was cold. Yang Jun’s meridians were in a total mess. His martial arts could be said to have been abolished.

Yang Jun called “father” before passing out. Yang Anzhi watched Li Qingshan, fearsome murderous intent bursting from his eyes. There wasn’t any shred of his refined appearance left. His heart was fully flooded by remorse and hatred. He’d come to the restaurant for a while already, but presumed that Yang Jun and

the group of disciples he led were enough to capture Li Qingshan.

It would have been a little awkward if he met with Liu Hong, so he directly hid on top of the restaurant to deal with any situation should they arise.

But how could he have foreseen that things would change so fast. He'd intended to act when Li Qingshan had kicked the square table over and cleared half the Dragon Gate disciples from the field, but then Li Qingshan had been ensnared in the sword formation immediately afterwards, his death certain.

Even one who'd seen Li Qingshan's fierce "enduring martial arts" like Liu Hong also believed that Li Qingshan was dying with no doubt, let alone he. Hence he'd stopped his actions, but this delay caused him to be too late.

Liu Hong chuckled and said: "Brother Yang, long time no see. How'd it suddenly become such a great disturbance, what's the real reason?" Li Qingshan noticed that Yang Anzhi's face was half similar to Yang Jun's. Added to Liu Hong's words, he knew that the one in front of him was the Dragon Gate Sect's suzerain, the first person of Suncheer's martial world.

Yang Anzhi was afterall one who'd traveled the rivers and lakes for many years, and his will was firm and unwavering unlike this group of aristocratic disciples. He put his son down, didn't even look at Liu Hong, saying to Li Qingshan instead: "I originally intended on persuading you to honestly take the thing out and wasn't planning on injuring you. But now I've changed my mind. My son has no grievance and no hatred with you, why did you use

such a cruel hand?” He couldn’t restrain his sky-vast fury as he spoke on, his appearance fierce and sinister.

Li Qingshan laughed instead when he heard those words: “Didn’t intend to injure me? No grievance and no hatred?” There was no telling how much humiliation and torment he’d have suffered if his martial arts were a little weaker and he’d fallen into Yang Jun’s hands. It was also almost certain he wouldn’t have been able to preserve this life.

On the mountain path, that high and aloof attitude of threat and humiliation, perhaps it couldn’t be counted as grievance and hatred! Perhaps Yang Jun also felt very much wronged. That’s right, I just said a few words, it’s not like I really cut your hand off.

“I only want to ask you, who told you about this thing? No matter, I’ll ask him face to face! With a dad like you who can’t distinguish between rights and wrongs, it’s no wonder you’d teach this kind of son and disciples. Today I’ll just kill you and remove the root of troubles from now on! Before stamping out the Black Wind Camp, I’ll first use you as a sacrifice to victory!” The crimson light within Li Qingshan’s eyes was even deeper.

Chapter 52: The Spiritual Weapon Displays Its Might

The Dragon Gate Sect was arrogant and overbearing, but Li Qingshan was ten times more arrogant and overbearing than the Dragon Gate Sect in the eyes of this crowd. In the space of a sentence, he'd decided the fate of two great influences of the martial world long entrenched in Suncheer.

There wasn't the slightest expression of anger on Yang Anzhi's face. He'd restored the cool-headed rationality required of a swordsman. He could instinctively judge that Li Qingshan was a powerful enemy rarely seen in all of his life.

But he also had absolute confidence in himself. His agile and graceful movement technique was the most suited to restrain Li Qingshan's enduring martial ability, just as Li Qingshan restrained Liu Hong's iron fist. No matter how great your strength, it was all a waste of your power if you couldn't hit the enemy. Li Qingshan could block swords from ordinary Dragon Gate disciples, but he couldn't block the sword of a grand second-grade master.

Li Qingshan likewise understood this point very clearly. And the main thing he was keenly aware of was that the sword Yang Anzhi wore wasn't the same as the fine steel longswords worn by ordinary disciples. But even escape was impossible when one faced this kind of opponent. There was only standing tall and facing them straight on.

The two men stood opposite each other. The upstairs of the restaurant suddenly quieted down, the murderous atmosphere

pressing down on everyone until they couldn't even breathe.

“Qiang!”

Yang Anzhi pulled his sword out from the sheathe. The eerie cold glint of the sword engulfed Li Qingshan.

Li Qingshan's pupils shrank. There was a faint layer of spiritual light shrouding the sword blade, just like the small knife he obtained today.

Men had fame, and swords also had fame. This was a famed sword no one inside Suncheer City was unaware of.

Soaring Dragon Sword, a treasured sword of the Dragon Gate Sect passed down for many generations that only the suzerain was qualified to wear. If men with fame were strong, then swords with fame were sharp! Even an ordinary person could shave iron as if it were butter with this sword in hand. In the hands of a genuine swordsman, it was a true tool for murder.

“This is a spiritual weapon!” The green bull had said this when he saw the small knife in Li Qingshan's hand, going back in time before the banquet.

“What's a spiritual weapon?” Li Qingshan fiddled with the small knife in his left hand: “Did I really pick up a treasure?” He'd often seen it written like this inside novels in his previous world. Just randomly stroll inside a miscellaneous goods store, and you'll pick

up a godly weapon unmatched in the world. From that moment on you'd kill gods if gods stopped your way, and kill Buddhas if Buddhas blocked your way.

The green bull laughed in contempt and broke his fantasy: "This thing barely attracted a layer of spiritual aura. It can't even amount to a low grade spiritual weapon. It was most likely used as a training tool by a beginner apprentice practicing weapons. But at your level, it can probably barely count as a treasure!" Only, the mocking taste in the bull's eyes was increasingly thicker.

This thing could only be used like a throwing knife. Whether for cultivators or for ordinary martial artists, it was merely a waste item that couldn't even amount to chicken ribs.

Li Qingshan had carefully collected the small knife like a cherished item. This was after all his first, hmm, spiritual weapon, it had major commemorative value. Wasn't it after all a rare item still.

But he didn't expect that he'd see another one in the turn of an eye. Moreover, it was even in his enemy's hand.

The Golden Spear Shop's shopkeeper was also mixed in with the gentry. When the other nobles were busy taking cover in alarm, he was watching the Soaring Dragon Sword with infatuation.

If this sword were in the Golden Spear Shop, he wouldn't have sold it off even if Li Qingshan had taken out all of his silver and begged him on his knees.

The sword qi assailed forth. Just when everyone present thought that Li Qingshan would barge forward and fight force with force just like earlier, he rolled his body to dodge the tip of the sword qi, and reached the corner of the restaurant.

The change in Yang Anzhi's strokes came even faster. He flicked his wrist, and the glint of the sword pressed toward Li Qingshan as it followed him like a shadow, separated only by a mere few inches. The cold air stung close enough to chill Li Qingshan's skin.

The nobles scattered in disarray while crying in fear wherever the two of them went, imagining they wanted to use them as meat shields.

Li Qingshan hadn't reached this level of shamelessness yet. He stretched his hand out and grabbed a square table, then swung it around like a weapon.

Such a big table seemed as light as air in his hands. A crazy wind sprang in all directions. The candle lamps swayed and flickered.

Yang Anzhi took no notice at all of this power. The glint of his sword reached forward and cut the table in pieces as if it was made of tofu. In the blink of an eye, only a table foot was left clutched inside Li Qingshan's hand.

It seemed Li Qingshan had exhausted his limited abilities as he fiercely hurled out the table foot. There was no telling whether it was because of panic and confusion, but the toss was unexpectedly

off the mark and flew past Yang Anzhi's head.

Yang Anzhi's sword's momentum was as a rainbow. Li Qingshan's back pasted itself to the wall, unable to retreat and unable to dodge.

The restaurant suddenly became pitch dark. The table foot that'd flown from Li Qingshan's hand had struck and dropped the last of the lamp light.

"Want to run! Too late!" Yang Anzhi shouted sternly, he but hadn't noticed that right before the darkness had fallen, the expression that had emerged on Li Qingshan's face wasn't fear strong enough to lose his mind, but a smile instead.

"Bang!" Li Qingshan two palms slapped together and caught the Soaring Dragon Sword in space of a hairbreadth

Yang Anzhi smiled coldly. With the soaring power of the forward thrust, it was wishful thinking to try to catch the sword with mere strength! The sword tip pierced through. The friction between palm and sword actually produced the harsh ear-piercing ring of metal grinding against metal.

There was only three inches left between the tip of the sword and Li Qingshan's throat.

Yang Anzhi's expression suddenly changed. The cold air of an evil wind attacked from behind the back of his head, making him

sense a crisis of life and death he hadn't felt for many long years.

“That's impossible!” This was the first thought he had.

Although his eyes couldn't see, his other senses were still there. How could he be unable to sense someone come so near. How powerful of a movement technique was that, could it be a concealed weapon?

If the lamps were still lit inside the restaurant, the crowd would have been able to see a small knife flying toward the back of Yang Anzhi's head, truly like a concealed weapon. But if there was someone who had opened their spiritual eyes like Li Qingshan, they would have seen that this small knife was held inside Little An's fair little hands. It turned out to be a suitable fit.

Little An cultivated the <Dao of the Beautiful Bones>, soaked every day in fresh blood. He was already unaffected by this level of blood energy and was able to genuinely press close to a master's body, yet a suitable weapon had still been lacking.

If he were still using an ordinary hunting knife, then with Yang Anzhi's strength, the internal strength protecting his body would make the knife bounce and fly out even if he didn't practice any hard external martial art. It would have been difficult to cause lethal injuries.

But now was another story. The spiritual weapon in Little An's hand was not only not a waste item, it was a divine sharp weapon made for assassination.

Li Qingshan used his body as bait precisely to draw Yang Anzhi into this situation. He didn't have any prior arrangement with Little An, and there had been even less of a communication between them. There was only extreme trust, and Little An indeed hadn't let him down. Their cooperation was extremely fine and wonderful.

Yang Anzhi was also powerful. He lowered his head and dodged past in the space of a hairbreadth. The edge of the knife almost scraped on his scalp as it glided past. He was startled but didn't panic. He only needed to continue using his strength and strike Li Qingshan dead, then he'd be able to calmly confront the concealed weapon master behind him.

The little knife suddenly turned around and stabbed downward.

It wasn't a concealed weapon!

Yang Anzhi's brain was instantly thrown into chaos, because he still hadn't sensed any living breath behind his back even now. Coldness rose in his heart, and he tried to take his sword back and defend himself regardless of anything else.

Li Qingshan's palms pressed tightly on the sword's blade. He laughed coldly. "Heh heh." It's easy to stab, but the first thing to be skewered is certainly your skull. Want to pull it away? Don't even think about it!

A sword was a man's life. Every swordsman had probably been

taught such a lesson, not to mention this sword was a treasure sword passed down from generation to generation.

The sword stayed between Li Qingshan's hands. The man flew out with a an extremely graceful flip, but the man himself couldn't stay graceful any longer, cutting an extremely sorry figure with his dishevelled hair.

All of this happened in the blink of an eye. From the moment Yang Anzhi had wielded his sword forward and forced Li Qingshan against the wall, to his retreat from the assassination, only the time of a few breaths had gone by.

The nobles were all in a panic and unable to react. There was only Liu Hong who sniffed and smelled the scent of blood. His heart was full of shock. Yang Anzhi was injured? How did this kid injure him?

Yang Anzhi had decisively abandoned his sword at the very last moment, but he'd still paid a heavy price. Little And had used the small spiritual knife to lacerate open a wound over a foot long on his back. Fresh blood gushed down.

Li Qingshan felt some admiration in his heart for his decision. He experienced for the first time this sentiment described inside books. Even if it were an enemy of life and death, even if he would spare no effort to send the other side to the land of the dead, he could still be shaken by the skill exhibited by his opponent during the confrontation.

But he would naturally not become tangled in those feelings in the middle of a battle, or tangled about the rights and wrongs of everything. Since they had a grudge set in blood, it was the proper way to kill the opponent regardless of anything else.

There was a patch of darkness upstairs the restaurant, with faint lamp light filtering in from the windows. Yang Anzhi opened his eyes wide, doing his best to adapt to this darkness. A black shadow appeared, and a fierce gale hit his face as it pounced his way, seemingly carrying a faint fishy smell with it.

Chapter 53: Black Wind Camp Master

A fierce tiger descending the mountains!

Yang Anzhi suddenly remembered this nickname he originally saw beneath his contempt, Tiger Descending the Mountains Li Qingshan. What was pouncing on him right now wasn't human, but a fierce beast baring its fangs and brandishing its claws.

He was just like a young child after losing his treasured sword. He had no way to resist and hurriedly retreated backward.

The evil wind once again hovered from behind, hooking his soul and demanding his life.

Li Qingshan had no misgivings as he sprinkled the at will, his style unrestrained, his fists blowing an awe-inspiring wind as they forced Yang Anzhi to dodge and hide this way and that. But there was no hole Little An couldn't drill into as he danced in the darkness, fiery and sinister.

One hard and one soft, one yang and one yin, the cooperation between the two of them was incredibly wonderful.

Yang Anzhi was also outstanding. Although he was wounded, he could still rely on his exceptional movement technique as he shuttled back and forth in evasion. But his body showed a few additional wounds, and the flow of fresh blood on his back became increasingly difficult to endure.

The scent of blood was heavy. Even ordinary people could smell it.

“Is Li Qingshan here?” A shout suddenly came from downstairs, powerful internal strength contained within, just like the clap of thunder on a quiet plain.

A dozen torches burned up and shone a bright patch of brightness upstairs.

Li Qingshan’s heart froze a moment. He hinted to Little An. The little knife immediately flew back into his sleeve. He didn’t want anyone to know of this secret for now.

Only now did the crowd see Yang Anzhi’s appearance, and they were all stunned speechless. Yang Anzhi’s momentum was as a rainbow before the lamp lights had been extinguished, and he was almost about to kill Li Qingshan. This was also consistent with his status as their publicly recognized first figure of Suncheer’s martial world, no matter how strong Li Qingshan was.

But Yang Anzhi had unexpectedly been defeated in the turn of an eye, and defeated so miserably to boot.

Yang Anzhi had also recovered his vision. He retreated beside Yang Jun. His face was pale white and his expression malevolent, looking like he wished to swallow Li Qingshan whole. He grabbed Yang Jun and went out, breaking through the windows.

Li Qingshan said “pity,” but he didn’t mind it too much. He put a foot on the windowsill and looked downward: “Li Qingshan is right here!”

He saw at a glance a silhouette tall and burly like a black bear, while that black bear also saw him. Two pairs of eyes faced each other, and lightning sparkles flew.

“Xiong Xiangwu!” Liu Hong said in surprise. Although he’d established his foundation within Suncheer City, he’d still shared karma with this ominous man.

“The Black Wind Bandits came into the city!” There was no telling who was the first to cry it out. First the group of nobles upstairs the restaurant grew panicked and disorderly, then immediately came yells echoing from far away.

Li Qingshan stood on the tall building and watched as almost the whole of Suncheer City became frenetic.

Xiong Xiangwu also watched Yang Anzhi with consternation. The two of them had obtained the news at the same time and had hurried to Suncheer City, one for revenge, one to seek the spirit ginseng.

The Dragon Gate Sect relied on their masterly movement technique and had arrived first to grab the spirit ginseng and avoid any mishap. They had to silence Li Qingshan before the Black Wind Camp got to him, so it was obvious that what Yang Anzhi

had said about “I wasn’t planning on injuring you” was merely bullshit.

But Li Qingshan’s might had exceeded everyone’s anticipation.

Yang Anzhi said: “This kid’s martial arts isn’t inferior to yours or mine, and he also has hidden moves. Camp master be careful.” He originally didn’t want to associate himself too closely with the Black Wind Camp, but now, every enemy of Li Qingshan’s was a friend of his.

“The Dragon Gate Sect colludes with the Black Wind Camp to raid Suncheer City, everyone can be witness!” Li Qingshan used his true qi to spread his voice far away.

Yang Anzhi shook and gnashed his teeth: “Li Qingshan, you and me can’t live under the same sky!”

That sentence of his had removed the halo of a famed righteous sect from the Dragon Gate Sect, and bashed them down to the status of evil bandits accomplices.

“If you dare to do it then don’t be afraid of people saying it! Good good good, camp master Xiong sent himself to my door, it saves me some troubles.” Li Qingshan five fingers spread open and caged Xiong Xiangwu in their shadow. He rode the momentum of routing the Dragon Gate Sect, and those words of his soared to the sky with their heroic spirit.

“What a big tone!” Xiong Xiangwu’s expression changed. He pushed on his feet and flew up as he attacked Li Qingshan. His movement technique was unexpectedly not lacking in the slightest, even with such a big body like his.

Li Qingshan was just about to act when a silhouette flashed beside him. Liu Hong used a “[Iron Knight Charging Out](#)” move and clashed with Xiong Xiangwu’s move in mid-air.

From a poem by Tang poet Bai Juyi, the Song of the Pipa Player, one of his defining poems. The whole line translates to something like “Suddenly there was water bursting out from a silver jar, iron knights charged out with spears and swords clashing from afar.” It expresses something like a sudden shift in the tone of the song described in the poem.

Xiong Xiangwu fell heavily back on the ground, while Liu Hong borrowed the strength of the collision and returned back to the building. Qi and blood were gushing on both men’s face.

Xiong Xiangwu was furious: “You!”

Liu Hong said: “Camp master Xiong comes to run wild inside Suncheer City, you’re really not giving the old man any face!” Every wild beast had its own territory, while men of the martial world put even more emphasis on this matter than wild beasts. They would absolute not let others casually encroach on their domain. The Black Wind Camp’s attitude had already made a local tyrant like him feel unhappy.

Of course, Liu Hong might not have been willing to stick his head

out for an ordinary person, even with Xiong Xiangwu mustering so many men. But right now, Li Qingshan had already displayed a strength sufficient to let people help him.

The second boss dressed up as a scholar said in a dark tone: “The Iron Fist Gate doesn’t fear attracting the disaster of wholesale extermination, making an enemy of my Black Wind Camp?”

Liu Hong shouted: “Where are the Iron Fist Gate disciples?”

As soon as his voice fell, silhouette after silhouette poured forth from the top of the streets and the bottom of the alleys, surrounding the restaurant. They were all Iron Fist Gate disciples without exception who’d rushed over when they received the news. A hundred answers to a single call, the momentum was even above Li Qingshan’s.

Heroes of the rivers and lakes could run unbridled over their own territory, certainly not only because of their own martial arts, but also thanks to the powerful influence behind their backs. Even if Xiong Xiangwu and Yang Anzhi joined hands, they’d still need to weigh the pros and cons.

Yang Anzhi suddenly said in a loud voice: “Sect leader Liu, don’t you want to know what’s the thing I came here for this time?”

Liu Hong lifted his eyebrows and exposed an interested appearance.

Li Qingshan frowned, but he had no way to stop him from speaking on.

“It’s for a spirit ginseng that appeared in the area around the Old White Peak. Martial artists need only absorb a little of its medicinal nature to make great progress in their martial arts. There’s even a great opportunity to rise to the innate realm. At present this object is within his hands, that’s why his martial arts progressed so fast.” Yang Anzhi pointed at Li Qingshan, his face filled with malicious venom.

An innocent common man was still guilty if possessing a treasured item. He spoke out the spirit ginseng’s existence in front of hundreds of people. The news would definitely spread like wildfire, and when the time came, countless men of the martial world longing to obtain the spirit ginseng would be like wild beasts smelling the scent of fresh blood. They would gather together, and no matter how strong Li Qingshan was he would still be torn into pieces.

Everyone’s gaze couldn’t help but involuntarily turn toward Li Qingshan. Li Qingshan lowered his eyebrows and drooped his eyelids, staying noncommittal. He knew that trying to defend himself would be in vain. His martial arts undoubtedly bore witness to Yang Anzhi’s words.

The worst case scenerio he was worried about had happened, but his mind didn’t become panicked or confused. There was a quietness beyond expectations instead.

“The old man is already at such an advanced age, I already have

no desire to make what great progress in my martial arts and be praised as a mighty hero of the rivers and lakes!” Liu Hong spoke thus, but his eyes were roaming over Li Qingshan’s body. His words obviously didn’t follow his heart and mind. There was no one from the martial world who didn’t want to achieve great progress in their martial arts.

“Furthermore, the spirit ginseng is also effective in extending one’s lifespan, could sect leader Liu not care about it either? You only need to pass down the order and seize this kid, then the spirit ginseng would be readily obtainable. At that time I and camp master Xiong will only demand vengeance, we’ll certainly not struggle with you over the spirit ginseng. Even if we wanted to struggle for it we wouldn’t be able to anyway.” Yang Anzhi exposed the fearsomeness of a sect leader that went beyond his own martial arts. Liu Hong was indeed very tempted, while Xiong Xiangwu’s eyes were also shining bright. No one could know what he was secretly thinking about.

In the turn of an eye, it once again became Li Qingshan facing everyone else. His eyes were peaceful, while his mind was urgently considering his plans of escape. He wasn’t counting on any loyalty Liu Hong would have toward him. Wasn’t it already because he had faith in loyalty that he’d been trapped into such a corner to begin with?

Of course, this wasn’t yet a desperate lethal impasse. He could naturally make an easy escape as long as he was willing to give up the spirit ginseng, but he wouldn’t do that unless as a very last resort. The supernatural skill Strength of Nine Bulls and Two Tigers didn’t put emphasis on cultivating qi, so the spirit ginseng was the best guarantee for his promotion to a so-called “innate

master.”

The stalemate at the scene was quickly broken. Xiong Xiangwu gave out a great shout and once again flew up to the building.

Liu Hong’s head was hanging down, as if pondering something, and he didn’t move. He’d decided to at least watch from the side, and it wasn’t impossible he’d kick him while he was down.

Yang Anzhi also seized the opportunity to smear some [golden skin ointment](#). He contained his injuries and was about to act.

Golden skin ointment: traditional Chinese medicine used for weapon wounds and bruises, often mentioned in Hong Kong wuxia movies, novels and such.

The muscles over his whole body stretched taut, waiting to unleash their accumulated power as he saw Li Qingshan about to be trapped into a siege from two great Suncheer masters,

Xiong Xiangwu’s expression suddenly made a turnaround. He forcefully twisted his body around in the air and fell back once again on the ground. A feather arrow brushed past his body as it carried a strong gale with it. On then did the sound of broken air spread over.

Chapter 54: Prepare My Spear And Lance

Xiong Xiangwu cut an awkward figure as he half-knelt on the ground. He fiercely raised his head toward the top of the restaurant building. A tall and robust figure stood there, the bowstring of the great bow in his hand still quivering. Although it wasn't as good as the Stone Rending Bow, it was also a rare hard iron bow.

Xiong Xiangwu's pupils shrank: "Sick Yellow Tiger!"

Sick Yellow Tiger said: "Camp master Xiong, this arrow was merely a greeting. I'm still hoping you'll weigh your options and retreat to avoid defeat. Don't blame my arrows for lacking in feelings otherwise!"

Xiong Xiangwu was shocked into sweating cold sweats all over his body. He knew that Sick Yellow Tiger was absolutely not boasting. If Sick Yellow Tiger had acted with all his ability right now with the determination to kill, it was very possible he'd have been killed on the spot by the arrow if he hadn't done his utmost to turn around in the middle of the air,. A divine marksman in hidden ambush and occupying a favorable position was really too fearsome.

Yang Anzhi said: "You really want to stick your head out for this kid!"

Sick Yellow Tiger said: "Li Qingshan indeed found the spirit ginseng, but it's already been eaten by this one present and cured

his chronic diseases of many years. Suzerain Yang has been looking for the wrong person.” Behind him also stood over a dozen hunters, over a dozen strong bows.

The four leading figures of Suncheer’s martial world had appeared together for the sake of Li Qingshan alone, either friends or enemies.

The Iron Fist Gate disciples’ face were all filled with admiration, while the residents nearby grew big guts and slightly opened their windows ajar, secretly observing a scene hard to come by.

The torches danced wildly in the cold wind. Yang Anzhi, Xiong Xiangwu, Liu Hong, Sick Yellow Tiger , Li Qingshan, everyone’s face flickered, sometimes bright and suddenly dark. Everyone seemed frozen stiff as they stood still without movements. Each of them had their own considerations and qualms. No one dared to act rashly when it involved all of them.

Li Qingshan suddenly laughed out loud. His laughter rode the wind and spread over far away: “Camp master Xiong, this is your one opportunity to kill me, why aren’t you acting yet? When I slaughter you with my own hands, those macaques under you still have the opportunity to flee. If you let today’s opportunity slip by, I’ll come for a visit to your door to ask for advice in the next few days, and pull out your Black Wind Camp down to the roots. I won’t spare a single one of you!”

Delirious ravings! Everyone at the scene felt those were ear-piercing ravings when they heard.

The Black Wind Camp had caused great turmoil in Suncheer for many years. Apart from the Horse Rein Village who'd comparatively stood aloof from worldly affairs, both the Dragon Gate Sect and the Iron Fist Gate had very much wanted to exterminate them. But Yang Anzhi and Liu Hong had both made calculations in their mind. They would only have had an opportunity to succeed if they joined hands, but even if they won they'd also needed to pay a heavy price.

Now Li Qingshan actually said he was going to exterminate the Black Wind Camp relying on his own strength. Even if their evaluations of his martial arts weren't low, they still felt he was too arrogant and ignorant.

Xiong Xiangwu's face was even closer to exploding in fury. He looked increasingly like a black bear: "Then I'll wait for you. If you don't come, I'll make sure not a single person from the Crouching Bull Village can survive." Finally, he left some ruthless words behind: "No matter who dares to help you, I'll search their houses and exterminate their whole clan!" He led his men and left in haste. The Iron Fist Gate disciples went to the sides out of their way and didn't block them. A group of bandits actually regarded Suncheer City as it were nothing, they were truly lawless and out of control.

Yang Anzhi also operated his movement technique and vanished in veil of the night, his voice coming from far away: "You just wait, Li Qingshan, your enemies will become more and more. The time of your death isn't far away."

Liu Hong arched his hands toward Li Qingshan and also took his men with him as he left. The noblemen were willing to donate ten times the bandit suppressing silver. They only begged him to let off those Dragon Gate Sect disciples, and also not to let them be caught in the middle.

The messy upstairs of the restaurant had already become complete emptiness. There was only Li Qingshan standing at the windows, his hand holding the the Soaring Dragon Sword he seized from Yang Anzhi.

Sick Yellow Tiger led his men and came upstairs. Li Qingshan turned his head and said: “Chief hunter Yellow, I want an explanation!”

Two hunters brought up a Little Black solidly bound in a bundle. Sick Yellow Tiger said: “Kneel down, tell!”

Little Black told the ins and outs of the whole story, finally saying: “Just kill me, I have no regret!”

Sick Yellow Tiger said with difficulty: “I watched Little Black grow up. This thing can only be blamed on my insufficient discipline. I invite you to spare him this time.” He pulled out the hunting knife at his waist, flipped it around and stuck it inside his own shoulder.

“Chief hunter!” Little Black said anxiously.

“Little Black, some things just can’t be done. This Sick Yellow Tiger has killed countless men during his life, but he’s never forgotten favors and violated loyalty, and he’s even less bitten the hand that fed him!” Sick Yellow Tiger stretched his hand. The hunter behind him delivered another hunting knife into his hand with a sorrowful expression. Sick Yellow Tiger stuck it inside his left shoulder with a backhand.

Sobs and tears wildly streaked on Little Black’s face, shame and regret intersecting on it. From childhood to adulthood, he had respected and adored this man even more than his own father, and now he had to watch him suffer from knives for his own sake.

Sick Yellow Tiger merely inserted a hunting knife toward the pit of his stomach.

Three knives and six holes, mortgaging a life with another life, this was an explanation a man of the rivers and lakes could give.

A hand steadily caught Sick Yellow Tiger’s wrist, and that knife couldn’t stick down any further.

Li Qingshan had first been stunned, then relieved afterwards: “The chief hunter wants to focus this matter all on himself and sort it with his death? It’s no use, even if they’re half believing and half doubting, they’d still come find me.”

Sick Yellow Tiger sighed heavily. One who’d traveled the martial world like him deeply understood how frightful this matter was. A rare book or a treasured sword were enough to stir up a sea of

blood over the rivers and lakes. The lives of first-grade, or even masters above first grade, were burned therein as if they were free of charges.

The red light vanished from within Li Qingshan's eyes. He actually let out a laugh, not a wild belly laugh to one's heart content. It was instead candid like an ordinary young man: "But I'm not afraid of them!" Those words were said straightforwardly and with self-confidence. He didn't wait for Sick Yellow Tiger to speak and warn him, and continued to say: "Is my tiger bone wine ready?"

"I'll have someone send it tomorrow!"

Li Qingshan didn't say much further. He went down the building and came out of the restaurant. There was suddenly a burst of cold on his face. He lifted his head; snowflakes floated in the dark sky.

A green shadow flew out from the locust wood plaque and danced randomly around him.

Li Qingshan said all to himself: "I'm not afraid of enemies, I'm afraid of betrayal." He saw Little An watch him with a face full of confusion and couldn't resist laughing as he said: "You can't understand even if I told you. Anyway you won't betray me, right!"

Perhaps Little An didn't understand the meaning of this "betrayal" from Li Qingshan's mouth, but he understood the expectation in his eyes, and nodded hastily.

“Let’s go, this night isn’t over yet!” A raging blaze had ignited within Li Qingshan’s eyes, as if it could melt this whole frozen world.

Old man pants drank a mouthful of old wine and poked the charcoal fire inside the furnace, trying to withstand the chill of the winter that could drill inside any hole.

He’d had no wife for all of his life as he stood guard over the arsenal for several decades. Colleagues left and right had all forgotten his name and only remembered that his family name was Zhang. They all called him old man Zhang, or old man Arsenal. Later on, no one knew why the children around started to call him [old man pants](#) man. The old man pants name spread around and polluted with some vulgar flavor this old fellow who never had a wife, for no reason at all.

Pants sounds the same as the arsenal in his other nickname

It was already very deep into the night, but he hadn’t fallen asleep. He was reminiscing his life as usual, seeming to ruminate as he extracted those most brilliant parts from within his memories, thinking them over and over as he borrowed the drunken mood. As to whether those memories were true or false, it was just like his name. No mentioning others, even he himself had no way of distinguishing them.

“Thump thump thump!” A few loud noises interrupted his reminiscing. He unhurriedly opened the door, “Who is it? At such a late hour?” Then he saw a teenager stand in front of the door exposing a rueful smile his way.

“The lord county magistrate Ye let me take some things from the arsenal, this is the official document!”

Old man pants shivered from head to toes. Although there were many illusory parts inside his memories, there were still a part of them that was real. He had truly been a soldier and waged wars, he had seen scenes with genuine swords and genuine spears killing men. The young man in front of his eyes was very young and very polite, but he'd let him smell a familiar breath – a killing breath.

A killing aura that lingered on without dispersing, this was a feeling that could only be felt on vicious soldiers and fierce generals who had taken the lives of several dozen men with their own hands. If one met such an enemy on the battlefield, it was truly the better the farther away one kept at.

He didn't even look carefully at the document before shakingly taking the key. He lifted the lantern and opened the arsenal's great gate.

The arsenal's gate was more than ten feet tall, built from pig iron, thirty six iron nails arranged in neat rows, with a pair of tiger heads biting an iron ring.

Old man pants used his strength to push a few times, but the gate didn't move a single shred. He mumbled: “Looks like it's frozen.” But then he saw the young man put his hand on the freezing cold iron gate and push it lightly. The iron gate opened with a rumble as he crossed alone inside.

Old man pants shrank his body and waited outside. In the past few years, it was the first time someone had come to take something from the arsenal. What was he going to take? What was he going to do with it?

While he was turning those thoughts around his head, he heard a “Keng Qiang” noise come his way. A figure stepped out of the warehouse, a black armor wrapped around his well-built body, filled with a sense of icy cold desolateness. The [armor skirt](#) swayed in the wind following his movements.

Old man pants’ breathing stagnated as he fell butt first on the ground. He once again recalled the terror of the battlefield, recalled those grim and violent figures. It seemed the man in front of him would brandish a blade and cut him down in the next moment.

Chapter 55: How Shall It Be Said You Have No Clothes

Li Qingshan patted the three quivers of arrows at his hips. He put the Soaring Dragon Sword and the Stone Rending Bow on his back, and carried that Tyrant Spear with exceptional length and frightening weight on his shoulder. He vanished inside the snowy darkness, only leaving behind a series of deep footprints on the snowy ground.

Inside the government offices, the adviser said to Ye Dachuan: “My lord, Li Qingshan didn’t listen to your advice, there’s nothing we can do!”

Originally Ye Dachuan had seen that the nobles were all intimidated by the Black Wind Camp’s threats and none of them wanted to help. Then he calculated that one versus two hundred was really a certain defeat. So he advised Li Qingshan to stay behind and take his time making his decision. How would Li Qingshan listen to him, he just forcibly demanded the official documents and left.

Ye Dachuan kept circling inside the room when he suddenly stopped. He hopped on his feet and said: “Gather some soldiers for me?”

The adviser said awkwardly: “Where do we have any soldier?”

Ye Dachuan said impatiently: “Those nobles actually dare to let their sons kill government employees in front of this official. The

Dragon Gate Sect is even more of a great bandit lair. Tell them, any family that doesn't send out men is a thieving rebel." He realized clearly that there was no need for him to continue acting as the county magistrate if Li Qingshan were to die. It was even possible for the Black Wind Camp and the Dragon Gate Sect to pour their anger over his head.

The adviser said: "My lord please think twice!" This way they'd bitterly offend every noble inside Suncheer.

Ye Dachuan's foot landed on his ass, "Why haven't you left yet!"

The adviser could only listen to his orders. He just went outside the hall's door when he was blocked by a dozen pitch-black figures. No one knew when they had come inside the government offices. The adviser jumped in shock and looked their way as he borrowed the faint light from the lanterns inside the hall. He saw that the dozen of them each carried bows and arrows on their backs: "It...it turns out to be the Horse Rein Village's, heroes, I...I don't know what noble errand brings you here so deep into the night?"

Sick Yellow Tiger's shoulders were wrapped in white clothes, but his bearing was as calm and steady as before as he patted the adviser's shoulder, saying: "Lord Ye, Horse Rein Village's Sick Yellow Tiger is willing to lend a hand."

Sick Yellow Tiger and the others had searched for a tavern to stay for the night after Li Qingshan left. But before they fell asleep they got news that Li Qingshan had left the city armed to the teeth.

Sick Yellow Tiger would naturally not think that he'd made his escape. He suddenly rose: "I'm going out for a while. Little Black will be in charge while I'm gone!"

Everyone knew where he was going. Little Black said: "Chief hunter, we'll go together with you!" After going through this matter, there was already a lot less of the frivolous childishness left on his face, and a lot more of an adult's steadiness.

"The village comes first!"

Little Black: "The Horse Rein Village's fame hasn't been gained through compromise either. We now have a great feud with the Black Wind Camp, things won't be peaceful for long. We can only stake our gambles on that man. If you let me be the one in charge, then this is my decision."

Sick Yellow Tiger said: "Good, I haven't suffered those two knives in vain today!"

The Suncheer City that had just regained its quiet became noisy once again.

Inside the Iron Fist Gate, Iron Lion Liu Hong likewise hadn't gone to sleep. He was mulling over everything that had happened today when Dragon Li entered inside the room, kneeling down with a "dong." "Master!"

Liu Hong frowned and said: "What are you doing?"

Dragon Li said: “I request the master to save the Crouching Bull Village!” The Black Wind Camp hadn’t razed the village yet, first because they wanted to first catch Li Qingshan this “chief criminal,” and secondly they didn’t act casually out of consideration for the Iron Fist Gate’s implication. But both sides had fallen out after tonight. The Black Wind Camp was certainly going to retaliate in a frenzy, and they were certain to wield the butcher’s knife.

Liu Hong said: “Go take everyone from your father’s house, and also everyone from Steward Liu’s house!”

But Dragon Li stayed on his knees and didn’t get up, “Please master save the Crouching Bull Village!”

“Didn’t you dislike that place?”

“But that’s the disciple’s home village!”

Liu Hong mumbled irresolutely to himself for a while, seemingly thinking about the gains and losses of

every facet. He suddenly stood up, “Go, gather the disciples!” He’d already taken into consideration the spirit ginseng carried by Li Qingshan and the Black Wind Camp’s wealth.

Dragon Li was delighted: “Thank you teacher!”

Ye Dachuan relied on his position as county magistrate, borrowed Li Qingshan's prestige together with the Horse Rein Village's might to command those nobles to send out their men. But there were still some nobles who meant to resist and didn't want to send anyone.

Just as Sick Yellow Tiger was frowning and wondering whether he should kill someone to make an example, Liu Hong walked in in great strides. He said arching his hands: "Chief hunter Yellow, I've been looking forward to meeting your famed self for a long time." Then he said to those nobles still resisting: "Today Liu Hong pledges to remove a great evil from Suncheer City. If you all are ready to help, this Liu Hong will certainly not forget." The implication underneath was, if you're not willing to help, I won't forget that either.

The nobles finally didn't dare to resist any further since circumstances had already reached this point. They reluctantly sent out their men. Although they were unwilling inside their hearts, they still gave out all their efforts when the time came to send out their men. Xiong Xiangwu's words still floated in their ears. If they couldn't kill the snake this time, they could only wait for their revenge, so they could only give it their all!

Moreover, with two mighty men like Sick Yellow Tiger and Liu Hong overseeing things, they truly felt that there was an opportunity to level the Black Wind Camp. The Black Wind Camp bringing disaster to the region didn't truly have nothing to do with them. Just like Steward Liu's nickname "Half Village Liu," most of the lands around Suncheer City had been annexed by those local tyrants, and the villages looted by the Black Wind Camp were often part of their assets. Even more so about the kidnapping and

ransom requests, those were too many to count. Otherwise they wouldn't have been willing to let the first few county magistrates gather their bandit suppressing taxes to begin with.

Xiong Xiangwu would never had thought that his threats had instead forced the nobles into becoming his blood enemies.

Ye Dachuan watched with disbelief the stream of people converging together. It had far exceeded his original expectations, there were actually four to five hundred people. He oversaw them in the center, relying on his status as a county venerable while Sick Yellow Tiger and Liu Hong restricted and ordered the men about. He'd never done such a heroic thing in all of his life, and the heart that had been shaded by fame and fortune unexpectedly also burned up with bravery.

The adviser stared blankly with round eyes and an open mouth. He thought about the words written inside books and originally far remote from him: The mighty issues a call, followers gather as clouds, and the world turns upside down.

The things in this world, maybe they merely needed a brave warrior, a hero to stand out, to transform the impossible into the possible, to guide the masses, to accomplish the so-called miracles.

However, this hero leading the way didn't often have a good ending.

Old man pants opened the arsenal's gate with two shaking arms. Piece after piece of armor and weapon were taken out, arming this

bandit-suppressing troop. They set foot on their journey amidst resounding metallic clangs.

Sick Yellow Tiger thought: “I hope we’re not too late!” This gathering of men had already wasted too much time.

Liu Hong thought: “Kid, you have to hold on for a while. However, if you were to die, the old man will take revenge for you!”

Li Qingshan traveled in fast strides inside the darkness. The whole of his equipment weighed a hundred pounds or two. Not only he didn’t feel it was laborious, it gave him a kind of thrill at setting his strength free instead.

The iron armor was cold, but his blood burned increasingly hotter, and his steps became increasingly faster as he walked on. In the end he was simply galloping on the mountains and fields, his heavy footsteps echoing “dong dong” like war drums.

He had no idea how long he walked through deep mountains and old forests when his steps suddenly halted. His gaze pierced the wind and snow like swords as it fired toward the mountain valley. A camp crept inside the darkness, faintly illuminated by the light of a few lanterns.

The Black Wind Camp was already in front of his eyes.

Li Qingshan didn’t rush hastily forward. He untied the wine

gourd and drained it in one gulp. The stamina spent was restored in the space of a moment, and there was a scorching hot breath bumping wild inside his body like a wild horse.

He suddenly remembered [a song from the Beijing Opera](#), and said at the top of his lungs: “Look in front, a pitch black hole, it must be that den of thieves, wait until I catch up forward and kill it clean and neat!”

From Beijing Opera’s piece <挑滑车>

Chapter 56: Charging Alone Into Black Wind Camp

Lanterns were brightly lit in the Black Wind Camp's meeting hall. The most important figures of the camp were gathered together, in the middle of discussing Li Qingshan.

“What should we do now big boss. This kid is hiding inside Suncheer City, there's even Sick Yellow Tiger protecting him.”

“Hmph, Yang Anzhi spread around the news about the spirit ginseng. Who can protect him? He'll die a violent death sooner or later.”

“We can't take our prestige back anymore if he died in someone else's hands. And that spirit ginseng will also fall into someone else's hand.” Said the second boss with the appearance of a scholar.

Xiong Xiangwu's eyelids twitched indeed. His longing for that spirit ginseng wasn't inferior to anyone else's.

“Didn't he say he'd come to us on his own? At that time I'll crush him into meat sauce.” The seventh boss was a bald fatty who wielded a big hammer, his face full of wild viciousness.

The various bosses looked at each others and mocked him one after another: “Old seventh, you're the only one who'd believe he's coming.” As long as one had a little brain, no one would believe someone would dare to break into the Black Wind Camp single-

handedly.

“We’ll force him to come if he doesn’t want to. Although the mountains are sealed by the great snow and it’s not suitable for large-scale maneuvers, we only need to send out a smaller group of men, it’ll be largely enough to massacre the Crouching Bull Village and redeem the Black Wind Camp’s fame. When the time comes we’ll look for a close intimate friend of his and cut their body into small slices, then send them over piece by piece. I don’t think he’ll be able to sit still then.” The second boss told them his poisonous plan.

The group of bosses all shouted “good” and praised him greatly. The second boss also flaunted himself with a laugh.

A huge “Boom” echoed, seemingly shaking the whole of the Black Wind Camp. A mountain bandit rushed inside and said: “Bad, bosses, there’s, there’s someone smashing the camp gates!”

In front of the Black Wind Camp, a dozen bandits standing guard over the gates watched those very camp gates, scared witless. The great gates nailed from great thick logs couldn’t give them any sense of security right now.

“Boom!” Another huge noise echoed. The logs trembled and sawdust flew up. It seemed there was a giant beast trying to break inside that kept ramming the camp gates, caving them in and cracking them bit by bit.

“Bang!” The huge logs broke apart, bits and pieces dispersing

everywhere. A piece of broken wood struck a mountain bandit on the chest. He threw up blood at once and fell on the ground, unable to stand up ever again.

The bandits were too occupied to attend to their comrades. They stared blankly at the mouth of the gates instead. A tall and burly figure stepped inside the black Wind Camp amidst the windy snow and the smoky dust.

“S...stop, here is the Black...” A bandit who seemed like a small gang leader said out some words as he resisted the terror in his heart. A feather arrow shot out from within the cloud of dust before he could finish, ending his words as well as his life.

Li Qingshan held the Stone Rending Bow, saying quietly: “I know!”

The dusty smoke dispersed. The mountain bandits found out that there was no army or giant beast standing in front of the camp, but merely a young man wearing armor and holding a great bow. The terror in their hearts suddenly quieted down a lot. Someone brandished his blade and yelled: “He’s only one man. Let’s go together and kill him, the camp master will reward us heavily!”

More than a dozen bandits grasped all kinds of weapons and threw themselves forward with a scream.

Li Qingshan calmly pulled out three arrows from a quiver and fitted them against the bowstring. He fully pulled the bowstring in a split second. The bowstring cried like the clang of metal, and the

sharp arrows ran through the three bandits charging in front with a stone-rending cloud-piercing might. They fell dead on the ground like wooden puppets with their strings cut off.

Li Qingshan drew on the bow like a spring, sharply firing his arrows, killing twelve bandits in succession.

“I’ll kill you!” There were still four bandits left who charged forward, hacking toward Li Qingshan’s head with a roar. Li Qingshan put the bow back and continued to walk forward as if he hadn’t seen them.

A whirlwind spun around him, sweeping along a sharp knife point. The four bandits’ throats spurted out blood at the same time as they fell down. One of the bandits had uncommon agility. He’d seen a small knife and wanted to brandish his blade to parry it, but the small knife had cut his blade off as if cutting tofu.

Li Qingshan stepped over the dozen bandit corpses and continued forward, coming to a still when he reached the mountain camp’s central open area. He saw brigands rush out from each and every barracks as they received the news, each of them holding a torch in their hands. It was very eye-catching inside the darkness.

He pulled the great bow, successively firing his arrows like linked pearls, each arrow faster than the last.

The spiritual wine’s effect was gradually becoming more volatile. He also became a little tipsy, but it unexpectedly seemed that there was a god helping his arrows, and not one of them fell into empty

air.

The meeting hall was set on the highest point of the Black Wind Camp. The Black Wind Camp bosses hurried out of the meeting hall and looked down from the terrace. Several bosses mouthed in shock at the same time: “He actually really dares to come?” Moreover he’d come so fast.

Li Qingshan suddenly saw the bandits stop their charge and retreat in an orderly manner. He lifted his head and saw Xiong Xiangwu at the first glance. He laughed out loud: “Camp master Xiong, a host like you is really slow to receive his guests! I couldn’t wait any longer, I went ahead and killed a few dozen bandits to relieve my boredom, you won’t blame me right!”

A gust of true qi bubbled out and carried this laughter over ten miles. It echoed among the mountains, covering the sound of the windy snow, seeming to echo into the ears of the bandits like the roll of thunder. Some who stood close and had insufficient martial arts immediately dropped to the ground, fresh blood flowing out of their ears.

“I wasn’t careful, I butchered a few again.” Li Qingshan covered his mouth and let out a drunken hiccup.

The group of brigands trembled in terror. Xiong Xiangwu’s eye sockets were going to crack open. The power of Li Qingshan’s internal strength far surpassed his imagination, and it seemed even more exquisite compared to ordinary internal strength. It wasn’t at all like the rumors that said he was merely a master training in an enduring external martial art. This was surely the

spirit ginseng's effect.

“This day next year will be the anniversary of your death. No, I have to capture you alive and torture you for seven days and seven nights!”

Li Qingshan laughed: “Haha, I don't have such idle elegant passion to deal with you, just quickly come down to die!” He lifted his hands and pulled the bow open. The smile on his face vanished suddenly. His right hand became like a blur, operating like a machine the motion of pulling an arrow and firing an arrow.

Seven arrows fired successively and formed a line as they shot toward the terrace. It was precisely the Pearl Link Arrows technique he'd learned in the Horse Rein Village.

“Hurry to dodge!” Xiong Xiangwu's warning came too late. A man was hit by the arrows and fell head first from the terrace, three arrows stuck into his body. He'd only dodged the first four.

“Sixth boss!” The bandits cried out in alarm.

Li Qingshan groped once more, but the three quivers were already all exhausted. He flung off the great bow to the side together with the quivers.

“He's out of arrows! Everybody, no need to be afraid, kill him!” The bandits yelled as the heartening news boosted their morale. They crowded forward like a black mass, surrounding him so tight

not even a drop of water could trickle through. There were only layers after layers of silhouettes and weapons flocking forward and drowning Li Qingshan.

Li Qingshan hooked up the Tyrant Spear beside his foot. He threw it on his shoulder with a “Clang,” and spun around like a whirlwind. The Tyrant Spear a hundred forty two pounds heavy and twelve feet long danced like a black dragon with the gloomy humming buzz of air being split open.

Five bandits tumbled and flew out at the same time. If they didn’t have their head cracked open then it was their chest that’d been crushed to pieces, dead enough that they couldn’t die again. With this lethal weapon in Li Qingshan’s hands, one would truly die at a touch and perish at a bump. There would certainly be no witness left alive.

The bandits behind were likewise smashed, and a patch of blood-curling screams mixed together with groans and moans. Li Qingshan looked at the terrace: “Don’t let those thieves throw away their lives in vain, hurry and come fight with me.”

Xiong Xiangwu didn’t have the slightest intent of acting despite seeing the casualty among his men. He sneered instead: “Fight with you?” He could see clear, looking down from above.

A dozen bandits specially dressed as servants had mixed inside the crowd and were nearing toward Li Qingshan. They didn’t brandish their weapons like their comrades, but stooped low instead.

Li Qingshan's heart shivered. There was a fearful murderous aura like a poisonous snake exposing its venomous fangs. But the masters worth his notice were clearly all on the terrace.

Not leaving him any time to think carefully, more than a dozen bandits lifted their hands together and shouted: "Everyone get out of the way!"

Li Qingshan immediately saw that they held a dozen black crossbows in their hands. They pulled the triggers at the same time.

Chapter 57: Trample The Black Wind Camp

The crossbow bolts broke through the air as they fired toward him, their might not much inferior compared to the Stone Rending Bow. “Dang Dang Dang Dang.” They pierced the iron armor and stabbed into Li Qingshan’s body. Li Qingshan’s figure immediately froze.

Xiong Xiangwu smirked coldly: “Are you fit to fight a battle with me with just by yourself. I’m already letting you off easy with this death!” He’d spent quite a bit of effort before he managed to procure those dozen crossbows. He’d also spent a great amount of time to train those crossbowmen. They were the Black Wind Camp’s true trump card.

He did the greatest of evils and the other influences in Suncheer City saw him as a thorn in their sides. He wouldn’t even be able to fall asleep without some safeguards. When those strong crossbows mounted an ambush, even a first grade master would have trouble escaping from death.

“And then?” The Li Qingshan who should have definitely died suddenly lifted his head and asked this. The crossbow bolts were nailed into the iron armor but couldn’t penetrate through to his muscles. But he was also drenched in cold sweat. If he didn’t have this iron armor to protect his body and dispel the bolts’ power, his “Bull Demon Skin Refining” would definitely not have blocked the violent shots from the strong crossbows. Even so, he only survived after spending his efforts. Strong bows and powerful crossbows were truly a killing master’s divine weapons.

“Protect the crossbowmen, fire again!” The second boss issued his order in a loud voice. The bandits rushed up while the crossbowmen hurried to reload their bolts. The crossbows were strong and easy to use, but their speed was far from bows, hence it was easy to be injured using them. However, such an order could make them display their greatest lethality as it commanded a group of mountain brigands just like a trained army.

“Sweep Across a Thousand Soldiers!” How would Li Qingshan willingly be a sitting duck. He identified the place with the greatest amount of bandits and operated the Tyrant Spear Art, charging forward like a chariot. The might of the spear surged on, drawing a dozen bandits inside just like a black dragon swallowing its preys. When the time came to spit them back out, they had directly become a dozen dead corpses.

How could they block him with just those few men.

A crossbowmen hadn't had time yet to pull the string open that his chest had been pierced through by the great spear. The body around a hundred pounds was lifted up and sent flying, crashing into another crossbowman in the distance.

Li Qingshan and his spear merged into one as he charged left and dashed right amidst the crowd of men. There was only attacking and no defending. Swords spears and halberds fell on his body but immediately bounced on his armor, not injuring him a single hair, while his great spear pierced through chests and broke skulls each time it waved, leaving no injured behind, only the dead.

In a short moment he'd already killed several dozen bandits, and

half the crossbowmen had also been killed. He stood among the group of brigands, more than ten bolts nailed into his armor, soaked in fresh blood from head to toes. A fright strong enough to break their guts sprung unbidden inside the bandits.

A bandit wanted to sneak attack him behind his back. Li Qingshan turned his head around, red light flashing inside his eyes. Before he had time to act, that bandit's face suddenly became ashen, actually scared into death.

Xiong Xiangwu watched with a raging heartache. His foundations would still be greatly damaged even if he won this time. The other bosses also had ugly expressions. The height of this Li Qingshan's martial arts could be said to surpass their imagination.

The second boss said: "Bosses don't worry. This Li Qingshan wields a great spear and wears an iron armor, he looks invulnerable and his power boundless. But he needs to carry a weight of several hundred pounds, he can't possibly last long no matter how high his martial arts. There's no harm in waiting until he gets tired before acting. The loss of subordinates can be recruited back."

There was little of what great war of three days and three nights when it came to a contest between masters. There were even very few such contest that lasted longer than the time of a cup of tea, because weapons were vicious and battles dangerous. A single careless move would be a death sentence. Martial artists had to burst out with their strength and will in the space of a moment, overwhelming the enemy in a burst of energy.

Xiong Xiangwu made the decision. He thought that even himself wouldn't last long after pulling the Stone Rending Bow several dozen times and rushing into melee with such weapon and equipment. A man would only be trampled down once his stamina ran out, even if his skills were vast as the sky. This was the frightfulness of war. A horde of ants biting an elephant to death wasn't a mere saying.

But how could they imagine that Li Qingshan not only didn't manifest any exhaustion, he became more valiant as the fight went on instead. The gourd of spiritual wine he drank down had stunning medicinal effects indeed as it combusted inside his body like a raging flame. His strength continued to gush out, and the Tyrant Spear danced like a blur in his hands. The spear followed the man's movements and killed to his heart's content, soaking him in blood from head to toes. The <Bull Demon Strong Fist> he cultivated wasn't something common martial arts could compare to either. What men most praised about a bull wasn't its strength, but usually its endurance.

Sweat ran on the second boss' forehead as he saw the bandits almost defeated, dying more and more, their corpses piling onto the ground: "What's happening?"

The snow became stronger, the snowflakes big as goose feathers. They fell onto the earth and covered a thousand mountains.

They fell on Li Qingshan, but were immediately swept out by the ferocious wind of the spear. A bandit was pricked up and sent flying, falling onto the ground, dyeing a patch of snowy land into a patch of blood red. There wasn't a single shred of ferocious aura

left on the remaining bandits as they retreated back in panic. Li Qingshan stilled the great spear in his hands: “What a great snow!”

Xiong Xiangwu ordered decisively: “Begin!” He flew down together with the other bosses. The bandits’ morale immediately soared up.

The seventh boss smashed his [hammer](#) downward as it whistled through the air. It had already created a hurricane of astonishing might before it even collided down, shocking men’s guts and livers. He was born with great strength and could kill tigers and bears.

The second boss said: “Don’t face him head on!”

“All the better if you come!”

Li Qingshan used a “Tyrant Lifting a Cauldron” move, the Tyrant Spear oppressively propping upwards

A huge “Clang” echoed as spear and hammer collided. The hammer flew back and smashed on the seventh boss’ head, his brain bursting out.

Taking this opportunity, the fourth boss’ [three-section staff](#) whipped at Li Qingshan’s hips, the fifth boss chopped powerfully at Li Qingshan’s back with a ghost-headed saber, while the second boss concealed himself among their momentum, insidiously pointing at the unguarded back of Li Qingshan’s head with an [iron-](#)

[ribbed fan.](#)

But the most dangerous was still Xiong Xiangwu's palm clutching towards his face.

Even if Li Qingshan could withstand those attacks thanks to his iron armor and the Bull Demon Skin Refining, the strength of their charge would still make him suffer incomparable pain, and then his body would stiffen. He could be fooled at the slightest carelessness.

He finally understood why even an old hand of the martial world like Liu Hong had changed his expression when he heard him talk about leveling the Black Wind Camp. He'd refused to believe that the danger within was so unimaginably great.

"Bull Demon Ground Stamp!" He was suddenly hit by an idea. All of the true qi poured into his right foot as it stamped heavily into the ground. It triggered a small earthquake inside a radius of ten feet. The ground's surface cracked and sank down, the shockwaves rolling in every direction.

Martial arts paid special attention to drawing strength from the ground, rooting your foot down. No one could leave the soil under their feet as long as they hadn't cultivated to a divine immortal who could command the wind and soar with the clouds. The several bosses' hands attacked like the wind, but their feet were stepped tightly on the ground.

Their figures immediately became unbalanced when Li Qingshan

stamped his foot down. They felt shockwaves assault them following alongside their feet, their heads spinning dizzy until they wanted to vomit blood. Their offensives also became messy and powerless when they fell on Li Qingshan's body, not showing any result. There was only Xiong Xiangwu with the highest martial arts among them who could preserve the strength of his clutching palm.

Li Qingshan laughed out loud and retreated back, dodging Xiong Xiangwu's claws to his face. He knocked violently into the fourth boss behind his back, while his spear stabbed straight at Xiong Xiangwu's chest at the same time.

The fourth boss screamed miserably, the bones of his whole body fracturing into pieces as he flew back out. Xiong Xiangwu pulled his palm back and twisted his body, temporarily avoiding Li Qingshan's dragon-like spear.

The fifth boss had the weakest martial arts and he hadn't come back to his senses yet at this time. Li Qingshan let go of the spear and stretched his hand out to grab his skull, then threw it to the ground. With a "Peng," white and red all flowed out just like a broken watermelon. He recovered the Tyrant Spear with a backhand and held it horizontally in front of his body, displaying the posture of the "Tyrannical Barrier."

He'd broken the Black Wind Camp offensive in the blink of an eye, and even killed four bosses. Third-grade masters were like young children in front of him, so weak they couldn't withstand a single blow.

The rest of the bandits stood dumbfounded as if they had been struck by a paralysis spell. They hadn't thought that their own mountain camp was actually so fragile, fragile just like the villages they had devastated.

The snow fell increasingly stronger. The snowy ground was dyed blood red by the flowing blood, then once again covered and frozen by the great snow, congealing into a desperate sight mixing red and white.

The pledge to level the Black Wind Camp was being achieved bit by bit!

Chapter 58: Strong Diamond Talisman

Li Qingshan kicked away the corpses beside him, saying while baring his teeth: “It’s much quieter this way. Come, camp master Xiong, I’ll give you a clean death!” He faintly frowned: “And the one behind, you come up together!”

The second boss dressed as a scholar didn’t have any of his elegant manners left. His head turban had fallen down and he was soaked in cold sweat all over. He was lucky to escape unharmed from Li Qingshan thanks to his decent movement technique, but his guts had already been scared broken. He retreated a step as if struck by a thunderbolt when Li Qingshan threw him a glance sidelong.

“Camp master, I don’t want to die here yet, my resourcefulness can’t be wasted!” The second boss turned around and escaped as he finished saying those words, his light body leaping up, reaching the front of the camp gates with only a few jumps. The other bandits also broke from the ranks as they followed behind and fled toward the gates.

“Trash you’re all trash!” Xiong Xiangwu yelled out great curses. He’d have liked nothing better than to kill those traitors with his own hands if not for Li Qingshan blocking his way.

There was a dark green blade edge that slipped quietly through the second boss’ neck just when he was on the verge of escaping out of the Black Mountain Camp.

On the one hand, he didn't have the same kind of skill as Yang Anzhi, and on the other hand his courage had already died. He cared only about fleeing with his life. How could he guard against the small knife coming from within the darkness. Fresh blood splashed out and his pupils spread open, unaware of whose hands he'd fallen to even until the moment of death.

The other bandits trying to escape also stepped on his trail toward death. The pitch black camp gates seemed to have become death's boundary.

Xiong Xiangwu wasn't sure what had happened in front of the camp gates. He could only faintly hear the sounds of heavy objects "peng peng" falling to the ground, and knew that everything pointed to disaster for those men. His heart went cold: "What did you do?"

Li Qingshan smiled flamboyantly: "Of course it's killing you bunch!" Little An didn't fear blood energy anymore after he cultivated the <Dao of the Beautiful Bones>, but the murderous atmosphere had pierced through the sky just like a war during the fight to the death right now, and Little An could only hover at the periphery, unable to come near. However this way he had been able to stay hidden and mount an ambush just at the right occasion.

Those bandits bumping blindly in the darkness were simply the best of preys. They had no way to retaliate in front of him and could only stretch out their necks, waiting to be executed one by one.

Xiong Xiangwu's eye sockets cracked open. The foundation he'd prepared for so many years was destroyed just like that, ruined in the hands of such a kid. Every bandit was guilty of evil crimes, and now there was only him left all by his lonely self. Such a great Black Wind Camp had been killed in a mere moment into a land of ghosts. There was only the whistle wind and snow left.

Li Qingshan swiftly sank his spear down. "Come then!"

Xiong Xiangwu stared deathly tight at Li Qingshan as he slipped his trembling hand inside his bosom. He took out a yellow paper talisman whose color had become faint, as if it were the most precious of items. He'd obtained this talisman by chance, and it hadn't been easy. It was a genuine life-saving straw. He hadn't expected he'd come to this point so he hadn't had time to use it yet. Now he couldn't care about much else.

Li Qingshan clearly saw the bright spiritual light on the paper talisman. His heart shivered. The spearpoint flickered, the true qi gushed out as he displayed the last move of the Tyrant Spear Art, also the one with the greatest might, "Tyrant Dominates The World." He pressed forward bravely, splitting through the air with a stab.

Xiong Xiangwu bit on the tip of his tongue and sprayed the blood on the paper talisman. His hand printed back on his own chest. A bunch of spiritual light burst out, enveloping him inside as he shouted crazily: "I'm going to kill you!"

"Clank!" The cry of intersecting metal sounded. The Tyrant Spear that nothing could stop was blocked by the layer of golden

spiritual light, unable to penetrate an inch inside. Little An originally wanted to go forward and lend Li Qingshan a hand, but he couldn't go one step nearer under the shine of that golden spiritual light.

Xiong Xiangwu grasped the tip of the spear. Li Qingshan felt a giant force transmit forth, unexpectedly not inferior to his. He almost couldn't control the spear and immediately used the "Bull Demon Hoof Stamp." His feet bit into ground, his gaze unwavering as a dragon, absolutely not retreating a single step.

The two men wrestled, and the iron spear thick as a bowl was twisted into an exaggerated curve.

The distance gradually closed. Five steps, three steps, one step.

Xiong Xiangwu fiercely raised his hand and slapped it down toward Li Qingshan's skull. This hand of his was stunningly big, like the fan of a bear palm, not in line with his body's proportions. It seemed even bigger right now, shrouded as it was in a layer of spiritual light.

The palm hadn't landed yet that the mad whistling wind was already pressing on Li Qingshan until he couldn't catch his breath. He let go of the Tyrant Spear and hurriedly retreated back. The palm scraped him, and the thick heavy iron armor broke into pieces like a paper stick. There was a burst of fierce pain on his chest, even stronger than the chop of blades and swords.

"Bang!" Xiong Xiangwu slapped the ground as if he couldn't

control his own strength, creating a loud noise. The surface of the ground collapsed down deeply, the momentum even higher than Li Qingshan's Bull Demon Hoof Stamp right then.

Li Qingshan finally couldn't refrain his surprise and said: "What's this?"

How would Xiong Xiangwu explain. He shouted explosively: "It's the time of your death!"

"Strong Diamond Talisman, when used it's as if the body is protected by diamond, while giving the strength of an ox!" No one knew from where the green bull had drilled out from as he calmly explained.

A bull that could speak. Xiong Xiangwu was stunned in a flash.

"Brother bull, why are you here?"

The green bull said: "Hurry to kill him, there's still important things to do!"

"Alright!"

Li Qingshan grabbed the remnant of the iron armor on his body and pulled it off, then walked in great strides toward Xiong Xiangwu: "What diamond protecting the body, watch me break your turtle shell!"

Xiong Xiangwu fan-like palm slapped down, thinking you're looking for the road to death on your own. Li Qingshan's true qi inside his body churned violently and the Bull Demon Strong Fist fired from the bottom up, exploding with all of his strength.

Palm and fist collided. A great sound echoed. Li Qingshan's foot sank down and the ground caved in, the rocks shattering in pieces. The bones all over his body groaned in pain, his muscles felt sore and numb, but he actually didn't care in the least and shouted: "Come again!" Another fist fired out.

"Boom." A huge palm slapped down, and Li Qingshan sank a little more into the ground.

Xiong Xiangwu wanted to flatten Li Qingshan and slap him into pieces, but Li Qingshan was like a piece of raw iron. No matter how hard you tried, he was braver the more he fought.

Palm and fist intersected more than ten times. Li Qingshan's calf had already sunken entirely into the soil, while his nose and mouth oozed with traces of fresh blood, but his expression was increasingly firm.

Xiong Xiangwu was drawing from external forces when all was said and done. Although his strength was endless, he couldn't catch his breath fast enough, and he finally exposed his flaws. How would Li Qingshan let go of it. A punch bombed out, but it was once again dispelled by that spiritual light.

Xiong Xiangwu laughed madly: “It’s useless, you can’t injure me!”

“I want to see how many punches you can block!” Li Qingshan didn’t give his enemy any opportunity to rest. His true qi burst out entirely and strengthened the might of his fists as he fired out ten punches in quick succession.

The spiritual light shuddered again and again under the blows, becoming increasingly fainter. Xiong Xiangwu retreated back again and again, a trace of fresh blood seeping from the corner of his mouth. The spiritual light obviously couldn’t dispel the entire might of the blows, and his heart and lungs were wounded by the shock.

Xiong Xiangwu knelt on a single knee under the blows, saying furious and unwilling: “You!”

“Die!” Li Qingshan pulled the Soaring Dragon Sword from his back and infused all of his true qi inside. The sword shivered and sang, radiating a sword beam over a foot long. He hacked down with all his strength, cutting into the spiritual light. It flowed down unhindered after a slight delay. A human head fell down. “Gu Lu Lu.” It rolled around a few laps, stupefaction and dread still left on its face.

Li Qingshan lifted the sword high and said, “The Black Wind camp master is hereupon killed, the Black Wind Camp is extinguished!” Then he flicked the sword: “It’s really a good sword!” He hadn’t use the sword from the start but consumed the talisman’s spiritual light first. Otherwise, while the spiritual light

was at its most abundant, he would not only be unable to kill Xiong Xiangwu in one strike, he'd only ruin this treasured sword instead.

Although this was also an imitation spiritual weapon that couldn't even be graded according to the green bull, it was at least a lot more practical than using his hands. "Brother bull, what was the important thing you said?"

The green bull said: "It's to help the little ghost cultivate the <Dao of the Beautiful Bones> into some shape. Hurry and drag all the corpses over here, don't waste so many good materials."

End of Book 1